A·DOCTOR'S TABLE·TALK

JAMES·G·MUMFORD

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A DOCTOR'S TABLE TALK

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BY JAMES GREGORY MUMFORD, M.D.

LECTURER ON SURGERY IN HARVARD UNIVERSITY, ETC.

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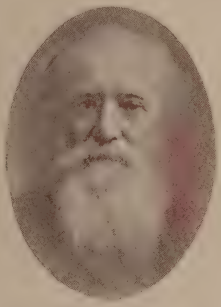

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TO

S. WEIR MITCHELL

GREAT PHYSICIAN AND BELOVED MAN OF LETTERS

THIS BOOK WITH SINCERE AFFECTION

IS INSCRIBED BY

THE WRITER

NOTE

In consigning this little book to a kind and ingenuous public, I make one emphatic protest: the fictitious persons here described do not represent actual individuals. Dr. Primrose, Dr. Ely, Dr. James, Dr. Flaxman, Dr. Consequence, Scholasticus, Scriba, and the rest have no true prototypes. They are composite studies. There is one exception: Dr. Optimus (chapter VI) is that remarkable man, Dr. Edward Fitch Cushing, of Cleveland, and my very dear friend, now dead.

Actual public and historical characters are not disguised, but are truly named in the text.

J. G. M.

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A Doctor's Table Talk

CHAPTER I

The Doctor's Habitat

My friend Dr. Myers does not live in the town of which I approved, for he is happily indifferent to his surroundings, as well as to the canons of good taste. Should you drive from Concord, Massachusetts, to Milton, you may, if you choose, travel for half a mile or more on a vast road which the admiring natives call a "boulevard." It is very wide; it bounds nothing; it leads nowhere; stretches of unimproved land surround it — with sand-pits, forlorn spaces, goat-ranges and tin-can depositories. In the midst of the boulevard runs a double trolley line — the gibbet-like posts stretching off in a straight, meaningless perspective. Parallel drives on either side of the rails bear countless motor-cars, with sad occupants, — speeding voiceless; while rarely a gloomy horse drags forth a Sunday van.

The region is inhabited. For miles on either side stand rows of wooden houses, — "villa apartments," they are called, — garish, ornate, tall, shapeless, with countless piazzas and balconies, cupolas, bow-windows, and unnamed bizarre projections; of many colors: pink houses, green houses, purple houses, yellow houses; houses of strange design, striped and starred and squared. People live therein. Late on a summer's afternoon, as you drive past, you will see weary fat men, in shirt-sleeves, rocking on the balconies, smoking cigars, and gazing solemnly at the tin cans below. Stout, black-haired women rock with them, and pursue a ceaseless knitting. Listless, unhealthy children throng the gutters, or whine unnoticed from open windows.

It is a dreary company; but it swarms with increase, and doctors are in demand. Into the midst of these people young Myers made his way, and among them he settled to the practice of his art.

He was right, and I was wrong. That settling of his took place ten years ago, and now he rules the region with a kindly sway. He lives in a great pink house, which he owns. He is happily married and a busy father. He has learned to sit inarticu-

late, with others of his kind, on a summer evening, mysteriously exchanging views of neighborhood interest. Rarely, I, too, have been admitted to these solemnities. Dr. Myers has called me in consultation; I have sat in the midst of his patients; I have dropped feeble words of advice, and have gained their mild good will. My friend tells me that, for himself, he is satisfied; that he has found his place. Happy man; thrice blessed of the gods; *Deo favente*, indeed.

To most of us that question of where to settle is a mighty problem. For many years my student friends, about to leave the hospital, and seek an establishment, have consulted me regarding their plans, and each man's problem contains new and difficult features. The bald question, "Where shall I locate?" which the young doctor confidently asks, regardless of the English language, admits of no simple answer. In his problem there are several items of which I want to know. Nowadays these young men are not products of a single mill. Some of them are trained as surgeons; others as internists. Some wish to specialize more narrowly; some few would fain be general practitioners. Some long for a country life; others for city practice;

some turn to the army or navy; while others, again, care not what they do so long as they get promptly to work and make a living, for there is a girl in port, and they would marry and be happy, — good human souls. And yet, mostly, the talk and the planning and the beating of heads is as naught. It's the man that counts, and not the place. Every large city among us abounds in sons of successful physicians. The father's fame is not transferred The son rises or falls like the rest of his kind. For years Robert Koch was an unknown country doctor in Wollstein. One of the best-known surgeons in New York City to-day was an "upstate" lad without influence or acquaintance; and the most popular surgeon in Boston was a country boy who hewed his own way. In a small Northwestern village, far from the haunts of men, there flourishes a little company of surgeons and physicians whose work has made them famous the world over. However, for the average man of moderate attainments and commonplace ambition, doubtless the location counts. Oliver Wendell Holmes advised such to open an office in the most conspicuous house on Beacon Street, and trust to luck.

If a man who has not had the advantage of a

residentship in a great hospital wishes to devote himself to surgery, he may choose one of two courses: assuming that he has a little money to carry him on for a few years, let him settle down quietly in the city of his choice, among congenial surroundings; seek opportunities for research work in laboratories, clinics, and libraries; bide his time, take what comes his way, and learn something of his kind as stray samples of humanity drift past him. Or, secondly, if he have true ambition and a wish to strike early and deep into the surgical field, knowing himself, perhaps, and his limitations, let him cut loose from timid hoverings about old haunts; let him, while still young, go out boldly into some of those new regions in which our country abounds. There let him grow up with the place, stimulated by his new opportunities, and expanding broadly and generously with the vigorous life about him. In five years he will smile with pity at his mild colleagues, clinging to that conventional community, the dust of which he himself has shaken from his feet. If I were again and now beginning the surgeon's life, such adventuring would be my course.

Perhaps a majority of the physicians in our land

live in small cities and towns of established size and considerable age. Such communities should be sought out far more commonly by our best-trained young men. At present jealousy and professional backbiting are unhappily prevalent in many of these places; but if a man in such a town can command his soul, his temper, and his tongue, he will live down envy, hatred, and malice before long, and will find his lines to be laid in very pleasant places. If he is trained properly in a specialty, let him cling to that specialty and so increase the number of his friends in the profession. A common cause of professional bad blood in small cities is the custom among some of their *general practitioners* of holding themselves out as *experts* in a specialty. That is a bad combination. Other general practitioners protest, and refuse to send them special cases. The genuine specialists protest, and regard them as hybrid humbugs. In these places of moderate size, however, is to be found a good living, a pleasant and satisfying life, and fame if our hero is worthy.

Then there is the *bona-fide* country doctor. Truly, if he be a man of education, culture, appreciation, and devotion, his life may well be the

happiest of all. The other day, my friend Dr. Primrose, a physician in a mountain village of New Hampshire, said to me: "I never could understand why you men settle down in the cities. The best years of your lives you spend on the rack, working yourselves to death to get practice; and later, when you're established in heavy practice, you find you've forgotten everything else; and you grind away at the dreary routine until you drop. For me, — I live. Life is very pleasant. I pass my time in a beautiful country and in healthful surroundings. I am always with nature. I have time to know and enjoy my wife and children; I have enough work to keep me busy, contented, and reasonably prosperous, but not so much as to wear me out. I can read and think and travel. You men struggle and succeed, and then half of you collapse." In some measure he is correct; and cheerful are the days I pass with this kindly philosopher.

Sometimes, of a summer midnight we've driven out together, — a silent and happy time for a man of feeling. The shadows fall from the hillside; the sounds of country night mingle in drowsy harmony; in the distance a dog barks; the moonlight sifts flickering through the leaves, and the dusky road

lies dimly undefined. At our feet, as we jog round a curve, the waters of the lake lap gently the constant shore; a tree toad, unceasing, sings his song; the wind sighs among pastured elms, obscure, remote; mist settles on the face of the waters. Overhead the stars sing together in their courses, the moon presides with gentle radiance over all. The dawn begins to break. Far away a cock crows on a hilltop; and now, at our feet, from the valley a voice replies. A mist rises about us; the air is chill. Infrequent lights appear on distant slopes; the chirp of birds is heard,— scattered, at first; uncertain, faint; then, gathering strength,—constant, sustained, soaring in mingled choir. Rocks, trees, and shrubs take form; the way grows clear; a mountain-top glows in the rising sun. We climb an upper road, circling the hill. The morning wind blows fresh upon our eyes. A battered house stands close against the trail; the old horse stops.

Such are some of the errands of Primrose, the country doctor; it is the life he loves; the poet often illustrates the man. Doubtless he is in some sense right about those of us who toil ceaselessly among men. Against us he quotes Stevenson's delightful words: "Extreme *busyness*, whether at school or

college, kirk or market, is a symptom of deficient vitality; and a faculty for idleness implies a catholic appetite and a strong sense of personal identity. There is a sort of dead-alive, hackneyed people about, who are scarcely conscious of living except in the exercise of some conventional occupation. Bring these fellows into the country, or set them aboard ship, and you will see how they pine for their desk or their study. They have no curiosity; they cannot give themselves over to random provocations; they do not take pleasure in the exercise of their faculties for its own sake; and unless Necessity lays about them with a stick, they will even stand still. It is no good speaking to such folk; they cannot be idle; their nature is not generous enough; and they pass their hours in a sort of coma which are not dedicated to furious moiling in the gold-mill."

As regards physicians, such reflections are not altogether fair. Wherever they live, or whatever their ambitions, doctors rarely become rich; but Dr. Primrose is a man of uncompromising views. Almost the only one among us whom he truly respects is the city *general practitioner*, a rare man in these latter days. That is a man, he will exclaim,

who attends to his proper business — the healing of the sick; and he twirls his cigar and pulls at his hair as he strides up and down my study. Then he becomes personal: "I mean Ely, Bill Ely. He promised well when we were all at the hospital twenty years ago. He liked folks, and he knew how to take care of 'em. He was always on his job, as you say; and they tell me he's on it still."

This is all true enough; Ely has made good; but then Ely is a rare soul. He set up an office near me when he began practice, and I have seen his daily work ever since. He looked towards general medicine (they call such men "internists" nowadays), while I looked towards surgery. To a wide experience he united learning and courage. He has succeeded beyond his earliest dreams; but then he hungers for work, and depends on no location. The sick and unfortunate seek him. He belongs to that old school of practitioners who believe in the doctor's personal influence and contact. He loathes the modern notion of a mechanical practice which depends solely on steam, serum, and test-tubes, but disregards personality, wisdom, sanity, and friendliness in the family physician. Once a year he and Primrose come together at my table

to exchange and refresh their views, — Ely all sympathy and encouragement; Primrose flashing philippics and thirsting for reform.

As Primrose says, Ely has certainly made good. To be sure, Ely went about his business from the first in the old-fashioned way; but in considerable measure that is what people still want; and later you shall hear the two men arguing the relative advantages of the old and the new. Beyond peradventure, Ely has succeeded by his untiring devotion to clinical medicine. He consults detail. When he opened his first office and installed one of the early telephones, he saw to it that that telephone was always intelligently answered. Think how the ordinary telephone is answered, he would lament. Some fool takes down the receiver and says, "Well; what do you want? No; I can't tell you when he'll come in. Call up whom? — what name? Murdock? Murphy? Mumpy? Well, spell it. Oh, Carter. Yes, I'll tell him"; and then she goes upon her gadding way, diligently forgetful of the message.

"Fancy the indignation of poor Mrs. Carter," groans our friend. "When you call a doctor, you're in pain or trouble. You want him. You don't want

to gossip. You mean business; and that's what the average servant does n't seem to understand."

So Ely imposed an invariable standard reply to telephone calls, in case he was not at home: "No; Dr. Ely is not in; but I can get him for you in a few minutes. What is your number? He will call you." Only last week I had occasion to telephone him, when I received that same familiar reply which his office attendant has been sending out these twenty years. It must have secured to him countless friends and thousands of dollars in all this time.

Such methods are sometimes called "tricks of practice" by the fools and the faithless among his contemporaries and rivals, but Ely has something better than tricks of practice to offer his patients. I have said that he has knowledge and ability. He began by studying the habits of his community. He observed that great numbers of prospective patients deserted the city every year during the summer and autumn months, migrating to such seaside places as Atlantic City, Beverly, and Newport. So he followed them. One prosperous summer he spent in Saunderstown, near Newport; then, the next year, encouraged by success, he descended

boldly upon Newport itself, where he was soon appreciated and properly valued. Now for eighteen years he has spent his time between Newport and his home city. He has made those two communities call for him and respect him because he has cherished his patients in the old-time manner, and has made their troubles his own.

This means a generous and sincere love of his kind. Such love is a quality that grows with a man's growth. It cannot be aped and cultivated. It cannot be imitated successfully for eighteen years. Ely follows his patients. He coördinates the generations. From the cradle to the grave whole families hang upon him. He cares for the babies in their growings-up until they have babies of their own. He is a storehouse of strange family histories and appropriate wisdom.

One day, perplexed and indignant, Dr. Ely came to me to talk over one of his problems, which he called "The Folly of the Vanderpoels." He had known the Vanderpoels for some ten years only. He called them one of his new families. They followed him from Newport. At the time of their first coming there was a cheerful, sparkling father, a joyous man of middle age, immersed in carnival

habits. There was a high-hearted mother, giving herself wholly to her many children. There were two sons and four daughters, of whom Ellen was the youngest. They took a big house, spent more money than they should, and then, shortly, the joyous father fell a victim to typhoid fever and died. Ellen, our heroine, was fourteen, a shy, serious child — always buried in her book, or by the hour long practicing her violin. For the winter after Mr. Vanderpoel's death, the mother, with her girls, went to Europe, where they spent most of their time during some years, returning home for a month or two only every summer.

"Now," said Ely, "you must suppose that sundry cheerful American girls, turned loose in sundry German watering-places, will attract a certain amount of attention. And of course our Vanderpoel girls have had their heads turned by those insufferable German and Austrian officers. What should happen but that our little friend Ellen, now a twenty-year-old beauty, must fall in love with some brass buttons, a sword and a mustache. The cub seems to be a decent enough cub, for he reciprocates, and the two have been planning matrimony; — she's been at home the past two

months buying stockings and other wedding garments.

"In the mean time her officer, a captain in a royal guard regiment, or something that sounds like it, has been having the deuce of a time getting permission to marry. It seems that the officers in certain Austrian regiments must not marry foreigners. So this poor fellow has been having a bad time of it; but finally, through family and court influence he has secured a special permit and absolution from the Emperor himself to marry our friend Ellen. So he's temporarily shed his brass buttons, concealed his sword in his trunk, clothed himself in the unbecoming garments of a Viennese civilian, and will arrive here to-night at eight o'clock to claim his bride; — and what do you suppose she is doing? She's locked the door of her room — taking care to leave open the communicating door of her sister's room; she's gone to bed in hysterics; she sobs that she 'hates the shape of her captain's nose, that she will not see him, and that she'll never, never, never marry him.'"

So they sent for poor Ely, and begged him to persuade the girl to decency and her duty. But his interference was of no use; of course it was of

no use, as Ely told them before he began his task. His heart was not in it. For all he knew, Ellen was right. He handed her the usual platitudes, describing the humiliation of her family and the shock and misery of the insulted Austrian. It was hopeless; — she turned her face to the wall, refused to argue, and sobbed out at intervals, "I can't help it; I hate him, I hate him, and I'll never marry him." And she kept her word. A brother and a sister met the poor, unsuspecting, smiling wretch at the train, and told him his fate. He refused to believe them, of course. He stayed in town for a week, trying to get speech of his beloved, but in vain. He haunted her house for days, taxing the patience and vocabulary of mother, brothers, and sisters; he even discovered poor Ely, and drove with him for hours, exhausting his sympathy and his most cherished German idioms. He refused food and comfort, he lived on beer and cigarettes, he began to cultivate a wild disorder of whisker about his foolish countenance; and at last, amid a deluge of tears, and sighs of Vanderpoel relief, he was led away to Vienna by poor Ellen's distracted eldest brother. That good soul never left him until he had delivered him safely at

his barracks, when he himself escaped to Paris for a two weeks' convalescence. What became of the broken-hearted lover Ely never heard; but one imagines the Gargantuan applause of his comrades when they heard his tale; the anger and mortification of his superiors; and the avidity with which poor Fritz sought the consolation and sympathy of some kindly neighborhood Gretchen.

"And the worst of it all was," said my indignant friend, as he told me the completed story, long afterward, "that, in spite of my silence and utmost effort to keep the affair quiet, some confounded reporter nosed it out, and, two days after the captain had left for home, told the whole yarn, exactly as it occurred, names and all, in one of the Sunday papers." The exposure was too much for human endurance. The family left town, and have never returned.

Perhaps I have gone out of my way and have wandered from our subject in telling this episode of the Vanderpoels. It illustrates, however, the variety of a physician's problems. Ely sometimes refers to it in our discussions, and I think he still regards it as one of the most difficult of the social and psychical phenomena with which he has had to deal.

Of all my friends among physicians, however, I turn most often to Dr. Primrose, when I look for detached views and a wide perspective. "To go back to your original question," he says, "let me observe that in the main I agree with you about localities, though what you state is true of all men in all vocations. I know many doctors, from Portland, Maine, to Portland, Oregon; and from Montreal to San Antonio. I attend their annual meetings; I like them. The able and efficient always make themselves felt. Their location has little to do with their success. I've come to the conclusion that the second-raters and the lame ducks are the fellows most particular about their place of abode. Yet, after all, did it ever occur to you that the second-raters are doing most of the work of the world? Few of us can be leaders. Most of us must get down into the pit, and grind faithfully at the mill, without hope of distinguished reward. To most of us, then, the question of location matters, but only in so far as it concerns competition. Without rivals we get along more comfortably — competition stimulates the elect, the leaders; it discourages the rest of us. After all, given a good education and some experience, faithful service is

what brings success to the average doctor; and I don't care where he serves. I'm old-fashioned enough," he adds, "to believe in the golden rule, good ethics, and a square deal. It does us no harm, too, to reflect sometimes on those fine old words of the Psalmist: 'Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. But his delight is in the law of the Lord; and in his law doth he meditate day and night.'"

CHAPTER II

Doctor and Patient — I

Dr. Primrose, from the New Hampshire hills, and Dr. Ely, from Madison Street, met at my house the other night for one of our annual dinner talks on medical topics and life in general. Both my friends were at their best, and kept the ladies long at the table. Primrose held forth for a time on present-day teaching in the universities; and the *educators*, as the newspapers call them, came in for their usual drubbing.

"But so many of our harsh criticisms are true," he said. "The college corporations are lavishing money on buildings and flower-beds, while the real teachers are starving; and untrained boys are set over the students in the classrooms. Here's a yarn a freshman friend of mine told me last night. It appears that the ambitious fellow has elected a Greek course. His class of twenty are reading the Odyssey. Now, you will admit, Ely, that that gives an unusual chance for the real teacher in these hard-headed days; that is a very great poem, little

read of late, about which old custom and tradition have grouped a vast library of some of the most interesting criticism in the world's literature. Think what the Odyssey has stood for these three thousand years, to the peoples and the poets of the world.

"So I said to my freshman friend, 'Good; that's splendid. It's the literature of the gods. Is n't your instructor delighted to have so large a class this year? Does he give you some of his own enthusiasm?'

"'Well; no, sir,' says my friend, with a grin; 'his principal interest is to find out how much we use trots.'"

"I know, I know," said Ely, with a sad shake of the head. He himself is an overseer of his university. "There's no doubt that the fundamental trouble is with our governing boards; but consider how difficult, or almost impossible, it is to find university governors or trustees who are trained for their job. They are business and professional men, who are important in their communities. They are chosen governors because they are important; but they are immersed mostly in their own affairs. They know nothing, at first, about

the conduct of great or small university matters; and, even later, they rarely succeed in handling those affairs to the best advantage, except in the case of the investment and expenditure of money."

"Yes, yes," quoth Primrose; "and I know that the true teacher is a rare man, a gift of God, indeed. How many real teachers had you? I knew two. One was the great head master of our old school; the other was a college professor. In the medical school we had no great, informing, and stimulating teachers, as we should have had."

My companions sat silent for a time, wagging their heads over the lamentable situation.

Said Ely; "Our best medical schools are run too exclusively for the race-horses. The average man does n't get enough mental stimulation, or practical advice about how to make his living. I see the results constantly among my younger consultants who come to me for help and direction. And then there is that protest which the doctors are raising throughout the land: 'What's the matter with practice? Have the people lost confidence in medicine?'"

"About that last question — the attitude of the public," remarked Primrose, "I have a word to

say, though I cannot pretend, in a sentence, to clear up a most complex situation. The puzzled uncertainty of the public and their rather irritating skepticism should not surprise us. The academic explanations of our sundry theorists — that we are inefficient, that our standards of education are uncertain, etc., etc. — are mostly rubbish. A hundred years ago, when we were far less efficient and well trained, the public trusted us with little question.

"The fact is, our professional fathers and grandfathers, back to the five hundredth generation and earlier, persistently fooled the public. Our generation has, quite properly, attempted to reverse the practice and tradition of the ages, by taking the public into its confidence, and attempting to discuss with the public our scientific problems. You cannot blame the fathers for their methods. Humbug and tomfoolery were much of the stock in trade of the priests, wizards, and medicine-men from whom we are descended. The same was true of all pretenders to knowledge. Throughout history, you will find the man who knows some one thing a little better than his neighbors making a mystery of it, and trading on his possession. The history of

religion shows the same tendency among bigots. A few great souls only have withstood the temptation. Our doctors, even fifty years ago, were walking in a maze of uncertainty and puzzlement. Only after Virchow, Pasteur, Koch, and a few others showed us the nature of disease, did we begin confidently to plant our feet on firm ground. But the public don't understand all that. They are looking always for immediate results. They persist in thinking that medicine is an exact science, as much as algebra; and we cannot make them see that it must be compared rather with farming or gardening.

"Now we have come out in the open, and are trying to tell the public what we are doing and attempting. They cannot or will not understand us. They're always looking for some underhand dealing or concealed meaning. Through their own ignorance, or lack of careful training, they fail utterly to comprehend our accurate, critical, scientific attitude of mind. Thank God; there are a few great exceptions, — the Hannas, the Rockefellers, the Carnegies and the Morgans. As Ewing[1] said the

[1] Professor James Ewing, "The Public and the Medical Profession." Address before the New York Academy of Medicine, November 16, 1911.

other day in his talk at the Academy of Medicine, and I read it from this journal — lack of public sympathy with the medical profession 'is seen in the crude and halting manner in which medical topics are handled by distinguished writers, clergymen, lawyers, statesmen, and public officials. The efforts of the daily press to furnish information on medical topics consist of sensationalism, personalities, wonder tales, absurdities. The National Government, however, has at last awakened to the necessity of a National Bureau of Health, such as has long existed in other countries. Yet, instead of going ahead with it, we have the astonishing spectacle of the President of the United States holding a public hearing to debate the question.' Let so much stand for my present contribution to this very difficult subject, which has troubled me much."

"Fundamentals and panaceas are, of course, the most interesting subjects for discussion," Ely remarked; "but my younger friends ask me for some practical means of improving their incomes. I tell them, first of all, to get and read carefully James Jackson's 'Letters to a Young Physician,' and then I talk over with them the dozen or more important

details of practice, which we learn by a hard experience only.

"So long as we have started on this rather technical subject, let's explore it further. It's interesting, and you can help me. Just to show you what inane things a recent graduate may do: I met this morning my very good friend John Strong. Now, Strong is an important man, whose name goes a long way in this community. His family are not regular patients of mine. It seems that last night one of his children developed what their trained nurse took to be diphtheria. Strong went in great haste, about one in the morning, for young Hamblen in his neighborhood, whom, as a competent general practitioner, I had recommended to him; and what do you suppose Hamblen did? He informed Strong that he could not see the patient, as he does not take cases of diphtheria. Of course Strong was furious. He went home and telephoned to me; I went over there, took cultures, and turned the case over to my assistant. I don't think it is diphtheria.

"This morning I had a pleasant talk with that young donkey, Hamblen. It seems he had a notion that he might have some sort of a surgical case this

week. 'Did you tell Mr. Strong?' I asked. No, he had not told Strong. At the least, he might have gone to his patient's house, interviewed the nurse, found another doctor for the child, and taken the responsibility off from the parents' shoulders. But no, he could think of nothing better to do than shout, 'No! No!' and slam the door. That young man was a good undergraduate student."

"Your friend Strong has a deficient sense of humor," said Primrose; "the other day a doctor I know told a patient to close his eyes, put his thumb to his nose, and stand on one leg. As the man was leaving the office, he said to the doctor, 'Why did you make me stand on one leg and all that business?' 'Oh,' said the other, grinning, 'I wanted to give my small boy practice with his new camera.' The patient was a Hebrew. He brought suit against the doctor for malpractice, and recovered one hundred dollars. He had no sense of humor either."

"We must not be too hard on the beginners," Ely replied. "Entirely aside from his technical training, the *business* of being a doctor is difficult, intricate, personal, and calls for a very superior form of tact and sense. It is for want of these quali-

ties that so many physicians, both men and women, fail; and I am not sure but what the women make worse failures than the men. I suppose because women, more than men, are tenacious of their own opinions. That sex element is a curious thing, by the way. Did you ever notice how most women nurses resent being under the orders of women doctors?"

Primrose seemed to agree, although he commonly holds women and women's achievements in the highest regard.

The discussion of practice by these two men leads me to formulate some of the views which I have often expressed to my younger friends in their early years of business. I find that Ely indorses me in the main. This discussion takes no account of technical training. A good, scientific training is assumed. We are talking about the more superficial aids to practice, with a glance, perhaps, at some questions of ethics and etiquette.

As the young doctor thinks of superficial, but important aids, let him make three divisions of his problem: first, his own personal setting, — house, office, and location; second, his attitude towards patients, — his method, his manner, the human

relation, and his regard for the individual; third, his professional relations, — his associates, the medical societies to which he belongs, his medico-social activities, and his contributions to the pleasure and information of his fellows.

In spite of what may be said about superior men, and their success no matter where they live, the question of location is important to most of us average men. I am not referring to the broad question of city, town, or country; but — in what part of the city or the village shall the young doctor open his office, and hang out his "shingle"? The general practitioner, or the surgeon, in most of our eastern American cities and towns, will do well, still, to appear to occupy his own house and to have his office there; and the more conspicuous the house the better. In our old communities the prejudice lingers that such a combination of house and business office marks a doctor as serious, conservative, and of good morals. As for specialists, the old communities regard them, like dentists, as pariahs, as outside of the rules. Let them go where they choose, — to hotels or apartment houses for their offices; and, indeed, they do often abide in such convenient places. In most American cities, how-

ever, — cities and towns beyond the Atlantic seaboard, — a much more convenient and reasonable custom now prevails. In those places, the doctors have learned, like lawyers and other professional men, to keep separate their homes and their business. Quite commonly, special buildings are erected for doctors, or doctors group themselves in converted private houses, in apartment houses, in hotels, or even in ordinary business blocks. It makes little difference where they go so long as they command easily those neighborhoods in which they wish to find their patients. And observe this, that a doctor must be able to live on the same financial scale as his neighbors. If he is in a tenement district, he may live from hand to mouth, as a poor man. If he is in a middle-class district, he may live on a small scale — spending from a thousand to fifteen hundred a year; but if he is surrounded by well-to-do or rich people, he must plan to spend money freely. His patients among his neighbors will expect to find in his establishment an air of circumstance, comfort, and proper distinction, — not necessarily luxury and extravagance, but the sort of thing they are accustomed to see in their own homes. Local conventions

have their significance in special localities. The city practitioner who makes his calls on foot or by trolley car may enjoy the confidence of his community, and be regarded as a prosperous and successful personage, whereas his country brother, in a neighboring village, must drive his horses or his motor, if he is not to be thought a hopeless failure.

Wherever he lives, however, and whatever his special practice, there are certain features and attributes of his setting which no physician can afford to neglect. A certain atmosphere, a certain air of serious work and solid accomplishment, a tone of smartness combined with a sense of assured propriety in his house, his rooms, and their furnishing, not only go a long way towards giving him an unconscious sense of security, but tend, through a sort of subconscious impression, to steady himself, to smooth his day's work, and to endow him with assurance and a feeling of professional dignity and power.

The reverse of all this is sombre and depressing. Not long ago I visited the house of a friend who complained bitterly of his lack of patients. Flaxman is a young man of rather sad address, but well educated for his work, who lives in an attractive

city suburb, among people of moderate means, small shopkeepers, sober clerks, and the like — a distinctly non-stimulating, *bourgeois* atmosphere; a community to be suffered, — gladly or not, — but from which no sweetness or light can be expected to emanate. They cannot yet appreciate Dr. Flaxman, sensitive, reserved, unheroic of aspect, — a man who would cut his tongue out rather than gossip of professional secrets. But his neighbors and clients complained of him for other reasons, and with some justice, as I could see. I drove to his house in a motor, but was unable to dismount at his door, owing to a dreary phalanx of disreputable ash-cans which lined and obstructed the curb. After floundering in the slush and ice of the street, and breaking through a dingy snow-bank, I encountered Flaxman on his knees, dismally breaking up the sidewalk ice with an inconsequential hatchet. At the sight of an old friend his expression changed instantly. He has a smile of rare sweetness and sympathy. As he jumped up from his dripping knees, I received his smile full in the eyes, and we shook hands warmly. I must go into the house at once and get dry, he ordered. He himself would be in, in five minutes,

and there were cigarettes and matches on his desk.

Flaxman, who is a bachelor, lived in a small, detached, commonplace wooden house, with a patch of lawn bearing in the midst an iron funeral urn painted blue. The house has a wing with a side entrance for patients, and in the wing were the waiting-room and office, with a bedroom on the floor above.

Making my way along the unkempt path to the side door, I found it obstructed by an old pair of rubber boots, a snow-shovel, and a down-at-heel broom. Two pulls at the bell failed at first to disturb the peace of the house, but finally the door was cautiously opened by a collarless drab, with bare arms and a water-soaked blue checked apron, who seemed inclined to dispute my entrance. The sight of Flaxman on the front walk was needed to convince her that I told the truth. I sank into an office chair, as she shuffled off down the passage. A strident and uncompromising female voice sounded from remote upper regions, demanding of "Maggie" information concerning my name, sex, and purposes, and animadverting in no uncertain tones on the character of any person who would

call at such an hour in the morning. Later I was informed that the cross lady abovestairs was Flaxman's landlady, and the mother of the collarless drab.

The interior of my poor friend's establishment was forlorn enough, though I knew him to be by nature a man of somewhat exacting requirements, interesting tastes, a reader of good books, and a lover of order. The struggle of life, with disappointment and chagrin, seemed to have changed all that. Everything about his office suggested neglect if not actual poverty. The passage was uncarpeted and unkempt; the office door stood partly open, its wider swing obstructed by a rickety table, on which were piled high dozens of unopened medical journals, running back probably for two or three years. The heavy odor of venerable cigar smoke clogged the atmosphere. The room was small and overlumbered, and the two windows were inaccessible. Before one window stood the office desk, littered and uninteresting; before the other a makeshift examining-table, constructed of two old dry-goods boxes, roughly knocked together, and partially covered by a disorderly rag of carpet. On the desk stood an unpleasant-looking glass vase full of some

material for examination, while the dump of patent medicine venders — bottles, boxes, and ointment jars — added to the confusion. And yet, somehow, you knew that this uncomely lair was the abode of a cultured man and a student. The walls, everywhere, were lined with books to the ceiling, — in tumbled disarray, to be sure, — but books, books, books; German, French, and English books and monographs — on physiology, chemistry, bacteriology, and practice; mingled with volumes of Hume, Gibbon, Ferrero, Rhodes, Keats, Oscar Wilde, Walter Pater, Ruskin, Matthew Arnold, Izaak Walton, and even Bernard Shaw and Chesterton; the "Atlantic Monthly," the "Outlook," "Spectator," and "Harper's Weekly" sprawled on desk and chair. Some loose sheets of unfinished manuscript showed me that Flaxman continued his researches on the function and diseases of the thyroid gland, while the ready microscope and microtome in a neighboring closet again suggested the serious investigator.

In spite of the hopeless confusion of the place, I said to myself, How can it be possible that the people hereabout do not see that this is a true physician come among them, a man of attain-

ments and ability, a man in whom there is no guile? And from his hospital record we know that he is abundantly able to treat disease; or is it that the people are hopeless philistines? That striking passage of Arthur Benson's came into my mind, naming Flaubert, of whom he writes: "It is recorded that he was pained at contact with the *bourgeois* mind, not because such people thought and felt differently from himself, but because they did not really think and feel at all. They were interested only in events. Their trivial volubility, using the language of emotion without either thinking or feeling, was what horrified him."

Before long Flaxman joined me. He came in with a deprecating smile, a shake of the head, and a what-do-you-think-of-it-all? attitude which was hard to answer. I sat back in the patient's chair, took a cigarette, and cogitated. Slowly light dawned on me, though I knew from the first that the case was far from hopeless.

"The great trouble with you, Flaxman, is that you are still an amateur. You have not *got* to work to fend off starvation. You have a small independent income."

"Yes, but what then?"

"This," I replied. "As you know, we are given to dividing mankind into classes according to our notions, — into those who do, or do not, answer letters; into those who do, or do not, close the door; into those who are always on time and those who are always late; and so on. For myself, I divide men into professionals and amateurs; into those who must work seriously in order to live, and those who work, in part or in whole, for the interest or pleasure they get out of it. I have been both an amateur and a professional, and I know the distinction as many men do not. Until I was twenty-eight years old, I had behind me the potential of a comfortable income — all I needed. I worked moderately, as I chose, and gained some sort of professional position — not much. I think I was a very decent amateur, but I had not grown up. Then, through a series of calamities, I found myself bankrupt; the little fortune swept away beyond recall, and myself involved in debts and obligations for which I was not to blame. Fortunately for my character and happiness I was recently married.

"Most men in active life find their Rubicon, first or last. That loss of fortune was my Rubicon.

I seemed suddenly to have advanced from childhood to maturity, but the passage of the river was involuntary and rough. For months, and perhaps for years, the new life seemed to belong to another person. As I walked the familiar streets in my anxious and morbid state, the very buildings were strange, and the old friends appeared to avoid me. My only resources — indeed, my salvation — were incessant work and the satisfaction of home. Everything else went widely by me. But I trust, and humbly believe, that the experience made a man of me. So I became a professional. Thanks to the confidence of a few generous friends I was able to keep my feet for the moment, and I went on. The great lesson I learned was not self-reliance, — thank God, most American men are born with that, — but a knowledge of the common lot. That is what levels us and brings us into sympathy with our kind. Do you know what it is to be unable to meet your rent on the first of the month, or to get money for the market bill, or to buy shoes for your wife, or to find car fare for yourself?

"All these wants, my friend, make a valuable experience, which you have never been privileged to acquire. But take courage; your little bank

account will not hurt you much. You have never had to say, I *must* succeed, to live; but you are man enough to say, I *will* succeed, to make myself respected.

"As I understand it, you want to be a practitioner, not a mere student. Just cast your eye over this outfit of yours. How can you expect self-respecting patients to come to you in such surroundings? Your tawdry house; your dirty sidewalk; your office unkempt, chaotic, down-at-heel; your carpet torn; your desk littered, your examining-table disreputable; your closed windows unapproachable, — and your whole establishment presided over by a strident vixen and a collarless drab. *Failure*, in capital letters, is written large on everything you own.

"What must you do? Get out of this office. You like the neighborhood; stay in it. Live in a decent, properly kept-up house; there are plenty such. Find a landlady who will make your interests hers. Live in one room if you must, but live in peace and dignity. If you can afford it, get an office attendant who will devote herself to you and to nothing else. Give your patients a sense of privacy, comfort, and confidence when they come

to you. Let them feel that they are dealing with a successful man, who understands himself and them, and will help them. Such trifles go far towards making a family doctor popular.

"Of course the best thing of all for you would be a proper marriage. You are the sort of man who needs a domestic keeper, and none can keep you so well as a wife; only don't marry a fool or a spendthrift. Whatever you do, come to me and report when six months have passed."

CHAPTER III

Doctor and Patient — II

EARLY in June, Ely and I were on our way to the New Hampshire hills for a week's fishing with Primrose. By agreement he met us at Concord, where we stopped off a couple of days for the annual "Anniversary" and boat-race of St. Paul's School. All three of us are old St. Paul's boys, and were following a frequent plan. It was my more than thirtieth "Anniversary," for I entered the school as a small Fourth Former in 1878, and the place is dear to me. No old school-boy forgets his introduction to that new, mysterious, and somewhat terrifying school life. As we drive out from the Concord station, two miles to the School, every house, tree, and wall is familiar. There, on the right, is the Phœnix, and there the Eagle Hotel; why so named no man knoweth, but famous in fact and fiction as the headquarters of questionable party politics. On the left of the broad Main Street, lined with farm wagons, and punctuated with "Democrat" buggies stopping for

neighborly salutes, and obstructing traffic, — on the left stands the old State House, dignified and remote in its grove of elms. Now our "hack," with its high-boned horses, swings off to the left, mounts the hill, and bears us past the "corner store" and out into the country. The broad-stretching valley of the Merrimac, its fields of waving green, its prosperous-looking farms, and in the middle distance its state fair-grounds, stretches far on our front. One smells the old familiar smells of the region, and begins to "sense" the School, still a long mile beyond.

The day was ideal for a boat-race, and as we approached the School we encountered joyous groups of boys, sauntering on the road, and burning time. "Pleasant View," Mecca of Christian Science, with its pink walls and gingerbread construction, lies to the left; to the right is the battered and picturesque old Indian monument, commemorating early settlers murdered by redskins. Farther down the road is the cheerful Alumni House, — the School inn, — and beyond, in the dip of the valley, and bordering road and ponds, the scattered school buildings themselves, with the beautiful chapel tower arising gently above the

trees, and presiding over all. The famous playing-fields of Eton are no more precious to old Etonians than are these friendly walls and gracious elms and meadows to those of us who love St. Paul's.

We drove to the rooms of my old friend Scholasticus to deposit our modest luggage, and then scattered to various houses for the midday School dinner, to meet later for the race at Long Pond, two miles distant across the hills.

At the Pond, that afternoon, I found Scholasticus, after some search, and, seated together on the hillside, we enjoyed the races. It is a beautiful sight on a clear summer's day. Long Pond lies in an oval basin about two miles long and half a mile wide. Farms and pine woods surround it, while the slopes rise sharply from its sparkling waters. Towards the head of the Pond, which we overlook, clusters of boys with their elders throng the shores. The whole School divides itself into two clubs, — Shattuck and Halcyon, — rivals now for many school-boy generations. Fathers, sons, and even grandsons cheer their club colors. Single shells and eight-oared crews frisk upon the lake. Some ninety boys in all are in the boats, — "First" crews, "Second" crews, "Third" crews, down to single

scullers, — they float before us. I recall to Scholasticus the day when he was a young master, and I a Sixth Form boy in one of the boats; how with no thought but of an easy victory my crew paddled out to the start; and how from the word "Go" until our gasping finish, we were steadily and continuously led by our despised and pitying rivals. Poor, forlorn company of lads, with broken hearts, as we thought, — I see us now paddling across the line, and rallying to a feeble and raucous cheer for the exulting enemy.

To-day, however, the tables are turned, and all goes as we would have it, even to the last. A "blue" sculler wins, then a "blue" Fifth crew, a Fourth, a Third, a Second, a First. It is a *blue day*, indeed, — never to be forgotten, — but not flippantly to be rehearsed. The catastrophe for the red is too awful and overwhelming, and the next year may plunge us all in grief. The cheers become few and broken; unfeeling parents only, who see their boys struggling in the boats of blue, wholeheartedly rejoice until the end.

A friendly motor returns us to the School; we watch the flag-raising and hear the generous cheers; we sup, and as evening falls we three old friends

gather ourselves again with Scholasticus to gossip of the School, the world, and the year that's nearly gone.

Scholasticus is a charming person; of middle height, erect, alert, he carries his handsome white head well back on broad shoulders, while his clean-shaven face and winning smile attract attention and response. Though living in a somewhat ecclesiastical atmosphere, he has never thought of taking orders, and he wears his rough gray suit and dark blue tie with a certain air of distinction among the black coats of some of his colleagues.

He is no hermit, no pessimist. He loves men and affairs, and to talk and read of them. While Latin is his specialty, his fine mind is a storehouse of varied information. His zeal for facts and his curiosity about all things under the sun are never sated. Perhaps his greatest attraction for others is the pleasure he seems to receive from the prattle of his friends, on whom he draws patiently; whose pride in their powers of speech expands under his smile and kindly words.

Encouraged by Scholasticus, Primrose usurped the floor. "Of course Scholasticus is interested in our problems," he vociferated; "he knows the

feebleness of our minds, — none better; and he knows as well as we do what a mess the whole educational world is in to-day. And by 'educational world' I don't mean the world of school and college merely; I group under the word 'education' all that concerns intellectual progress: the education of professional men and the making them efficient; the education of the politicians, of the labor unions, of the farmers, of the financial, manufacturing, and commercial classes, — of all those people whose properly coördinated efforts and coöperation should go to make the world so much easier and pleasanter a place in which to live. One sees clearly what ought to be done, and at the same time one is impotent to accomplish results."

"Yet improvement is going on, if only you had the grace to admit it," said Ely; "the world is better than it was when we were boys, and vastly better than it was two hundred years ago. But what a banal remark! Of course to us, as physicians, nothing is more obvious than the increase in the world's population, — owing to the infrequency of war, — the prolonging of human life, the elimination of much epidemic disease, and the great diminution of infant mortality. In

view of such facts, the common talk of race-suicide sounds rubbishy. I suppose, though, you are coming around to the problems of the medical profession. They are what Scholasticus wants to hear about."

"Nay, nay," remarks our friend the scholar; "but indeed you are already on the subject. What chiefly puzzles me in these days of specializing is how to find a doctor in the city to take care of me when I am ill. Primrose suggested that problem when he spoke of progressive men and groups of men failing to coöperate for the greatest efficiency. Men of varied affairs don't coöperate because they know too little of each other, and of how to coöperate for the greatest benefit to the public. Broad-minded men of wide general information are hard to find; yet such are the men who must be found, or possibly trained, to coördinate the various cogs in our modern social structure. We are making progress, but very slowly, considering the intelligence we boast. The great machine still runs rumbling and rusty in spite of the more or less groping efforts of chambers of commerce, worlds' fairs and houses of governors. Each man and group of men — labor unions, employers of labor,

political parties, farmers and merchants, lawyers, doctors, and artisans — is looking out for his or its own interest, and playing his own hand alone, regardless of all the rest. These men can't define the word 'coöperation.' They are far, indeed, from it, as their inane lawsuits, tariff bills, and labor wars show us every day. Since we can't have an all-wise God, or dictator, or czar to straighten out the tangle, we must go ahead in our old stupid, blundering, evolutionary fashion. But that does not half answer my first question: when I am in the city, how am I to find an out-and-out, old-fashioned doctor for my needs? Your specialists don't help, and there is no one but a hotel clerk to tell me what to do."

Scholasticus had hit upon one of our most pressing and difficult problems. When my friends and I were medical students, one of our far-sighted teachers advised us all to become general practitioners. They are needed more and more, he said; and the men who stick to general practice will do the most good, and make the best incomes.

"The other day," I remarked, "a well-known internist told me that there are but two first-class family doctors left in the city. Only yesterday I

met with another example of the situation about which Scholasticus complains: A young woman, reader and companion to an elderly invalid, broke down through anxiety and loss of sleep, and became the victim of what is still called 'neurasthenia.' She was advised to put herself under the care of a certain Dr. Blackwell. After seeing her several times Dr. Blackwell concluded that she was 'nothing but a nervous wreck,' and sent her to a sanatorium, with the advice that she be given a long rest. The sanatorium physicians thought differently, and put her through a course of 'feeding up' and active exercises. By the end of two weeks she was completely undone, and her friends, in great distress, came to me asking what course to follow. They said she was in despair about the sanatorium, and knew not what to do. I pointed out to them that Dr. Blackwell had been acting as her family physician, and that they had best consult him as to her proper course. Further, I reminded them that I knew nothing at first-hand about her case. Accordingly they went to Dr. Blackwell, who informed them that he was a specialist in digestive disorders, that he had sent the patient to a sanatorium for the treatment of her nervous troubles, that he had no

further advice to give, and that he must now wash his hands of the whole affair. The much buffeted people, in sore distress, then came back to me; and realizing at last that Dr. Blackwell is a donkey, I sent them to a safe general practitioner who has saved the day for his happy patient.

"Such stories are common enough, but they don't argue, as many shallow persons think and say, that doctors are 'no good,' and that the profession of medicine is a failure. Entirely aside from any question of scientific progress, the dividing of physicians into specialists is the most momentous feature of modern practice. Neither the profession nor the public has yet adapted itself to the change, or learned how best to utilize the new forces. In other words, the many cogs in the machine are not yet coördinated; and the family doctor must survive, if only to attend to that coördinating.

"The question of providing competent and humane physicians to take care of the sick is becoming increasingly more urgent, as Scholasticus intimates; and the trouble lies with the high-grade medical schools and hospitals. These institutions are becoming dominated by men largely unfamiliar

with the problems of practice; their leading idea being to train both students and physicians to an expert knowledge of preventive medicine, and the theory rather than the practice of physic. Teachers of undergraduate students realize their own shortcomings more or less, but justify their course by saying that the young men will get all the bedside practice they want when they become hospital internes. In a measure that is true, and the young men, in the course of one or two years, do become familiar with disease as seen in hospitals; but how are they to acquire a knowledge of disease as seen in private practice? The rank and file are content to work out their own salvation through the stress of daily experience, and the theoretical knowledge already theirs. Laboratories and hospitals no longer concern them. The more ambitious men, however, — those who think they may become qualified to lead in medical progress, — find permanent hospital positions, and struggle to keep to the front in hospital, teaching, and laboratory work as well as in practice. They fail, of course. You can't be a great laboratory investigator and a good practitioner at the same time.

"Then there is that pernicious advice, which is

constantly given to beginners: 'If you have a little money of your own, stay in the city and wait for practice. If you must support yourself at once, go to a small town or to the country'; — the result of which advice, when it is taken, is to send away our most promising men. *Per contra*, the more or less idle amateur, waiting for practice, is a sight for gods and men. You will find him loafing at his club any afternoon after four o'clock. From the best of these men who elect to wait, the hospital staffs are recruited. Happily, every year one or two genuine professionals remain in the city struggle. They are our chosen ones.

"Picture to yourself then, the young internist, five or ten years established, immersed in hospital and academic work: his best energies so occupied; supported, perhaps, by his modest patrimony, or having taken to himself a wife with money. From such material, general practitioners — able, experienced, resourceful — are not made. These hospital men do not stand ready, day and night, for small fees or for no fees, to rush to the aid of the afflicted. Soon they learn to call themselves 'consultants,' and to keep hours and appointments so irregularly that practice cannot find them. Then

patients float off — to the virtuous and patient rank and file, to irregular practitioners, to osteopathists, to Christian Scientists, and the like. When the chief shepherds have, for a generation, so neglected and maltreated their flocks, what can you expect? Many of these self-satisfied seekers after causes have become so contemptuous and so inexpert in the treatment of disease that the words 'social service' are to them a stench, and the successes of psychotherapy a cause for bitterness and intolerant outcries, — *l'infame* of Voltaire, which even among 'scientists' will never die."

"What then? where is your remedy?" says Scholasticus with a weary smile, when I reach the end of my holding forth.

Ely took up the tale. "There are two courses to follow, — we may choose one or both: let the hospital trustees see to it that more men of their staffs are encouraged to practice general medicine, and not to give the best part of their days to the hospital; or, let little groups of specialists, including general practitioners, form associations for practice. To such a group, as to an ordinary doctor, or to a small hospital, a patient should be able to go, or to send, at any time, and get there any

sort of service he wants, and at a sliding-scale-fee, as is the fact now with individual practitioners. There are many other reasons for forming such groups in practice, — chief among which is this, that thus we may best reach the great mass of the public, the people of moderate means; those who cannot now afford freely to consult specialists, but who do not wish to be classed with the very poor, by attending the free clinics of the municipal hospitals. That great middle class, estimated at eighty per cent of our people, fail now to get the full benefit of modern scientific medicine."

"Of course," Primrose remarked, "you city men have problems to meet which don't especially concern us country doctors. I have to take care of every variety of disease from felons and broken arms to consumption and brain abscess. When I have a case I can't handle, I send for one of you good-natured men to help me out, or I persuade my patient to go to the city.

"There are certain features of practice, however, which we must all consider, — in dealing with which we meet on common ground; I mean our personal contact with patients, — what one might call the human, or inhuman, side of practice. In

that relation the real physician or the humbug is displayed, — I don't care what his training or what his ability for writing scientific papers. It's the old *argumentum ad hominem*. Where the personal relation is concerned, you can't make a silk purse out of a sow's ear. You may think you can make a fair substitute for a physician out of a machine with a test-tube in his hand. That's the reason why so many of you people imagine you prefer impersonal consulting work to the hard soul-exhausting grind of a true physician. But you can't eliminate the personal element. The community find you out, and hate you, or laugh at you, or love you, just as you may deserve."

Scholasticus smiled a sympathetic smile.

"My friends, my friends," I said, "such talk is near treason. Is it for me, unworthy, to defend 'scientific medicine'? The other day I said something of Primrose's heresy to our friend Bluff, the pathologist. It was a plea for the old-time humanist doctor as compared with the modern product.

"'Nonsense, nonsense!' he snorted; 'those old ladies may have been good-natured, but they did awful harm, awful harm, awful harm!' Can't you hear him?

"What's the use, however, of continually rehearsing the triumphs of medicine in the past hundred years? They are certainly interesting, but not marvelous. The teachings of such as Voltaire, and then the French Revolution, set men free to think, without fear of what king or church might say or do. Of course, as soon as men began to think again, and to express themselves, after the lapse of fifteen hundred years, then they began to discover things. But this was no more true of medicine than of other activities. The re-discovery of the capacity for thought is the great triumph of modern times. In medicine, of course, there are many things to record of the past century — from Jenner's vaccination, let us say, through the development of pathology, physiology, chemistry, and the rest of it, down to the most recent discoveries in immunity, in serum therapy, and the superb jugglery of modern surgery. But these are heavy subjects for midnight gossip.

"We were talking not long ago about the troubles of us commonplace doctors, and of how men are saying that practice is leaving the regular profession. Surely the fault is mainly ours. As I said, — when young doctors come to me for advice,

I talk to them, among other things, of their personal relations with their patients and their patients' friends. We can't all be as brutal as my old acquaintance Roland. When an anxious, inquiring busy-body came to his office to ask, 'How is dear Mary? and what *did* you find her trouble to be?' — he used to send the busy-body a bill for ten dollars. The remedy was effective."

"Roland was n't a real doctor," said Ely. "He was a business man, which, thank God, few doctors are. If we were, practice would be leaving us faster than it is said to leave us now.

"There's an inevitable fineness about a physician's life, — and his wide grasp of human experience as compared with that of other men, — which even the meanest of us in some fashion perceives. It usually subdues the more vulgar business instinct."

Such were the reflections of Ely, and I believe them to be sound; but there are certain worldly-wise aids to practice which the beginner should consider. For example, he should make his rounds promptly, and should make his new calls first and at once. There is a common sort of medical goose who seems to think that calls made tardily, or put off for a day, impress patients with the doctor's

importance and rush of business. Alas; late calls do no such thing. They usually create the impression that the fellow is inefficient and lazy. My old friend Dr. Circumstance is an exception to the rule; and being popular and amazingly effective, his example has done much harm to admiring juniors. He is an abnormally busy surgeon and is generally from an hour to two hours late for appointments. He bites off too much. But then he makes up for it. He comes in, breathless and troubled, to the patient and his friends; and ingenuously takes them into his confidence. They are made partners in his trials. He explains that he has driven furiously from a terrible operation, where he overcame difficulties never before recorded; and that, at last, he removed an appendix, which in another thirteen minutes would have killed the luckless patient. However, modern surgical science prevailed. We name no names, but you are given to understand that the patient came on last night from Washington in desperate haste and by special train. — How is the stock market acting now, Job?

Let not youthful genius be misled. Fine old Circumstance can carry it off, but you can't.

Again, and above all things, don't arrive late for a consultation. You are allowed five minutes' grace, but err on the wrong side. You can't humbug your colleagues.

In the sick-room always try to be self-controlled, kind, firm, and sustaining; and never tell needless fibs to a very ill patient. To some *one* responsible member of his family, at least, always tell the exact truth. In talking to your patient, don't be guided by his wife or daughter, or some other, as to what you may tell him. Under the stress of severe illness in the house, the advice of wife and daughter is often silly. They cannot get the patient's point of view. If you are sick unto death, you regard death with a composure of which well people have small conception. But don't worry over-much. The man or woman in acute illness who asks the blunt question, — Am I going to die? — is very rare indeed.

On the other hand, the chronic invalid — the woman with cancer, or Bright's disease — often wants to know the truth, and she has a right to know. Tell her the truth, and as cheerfully as possible, for you need not carry gloom. Here is a chance for some helpful psychotherapy. Admit

that the patient's ailment is desperate or incurable, but point out that she still has many months or years of life. The difference between her and her attendant sister is that she knows in advance the disease which is to cause her death, while her sister is still ignorant of the nature of her own fatal illness: "You will surprise them all yet; you will outlive half your family. None of us is immortal, and the going is not hard. We've all got to go before long. The only question is, — who will go first?"

With such talk and encouragement, fortified by his other palliative treatment, the physician will find that most intelligent patients regain their composure and leave his office in a reasonably cheerful and philosophical state of mind.

The physician at a patient's house, on the one hand, or in his own office on the other, occupies somewhat different rôles; not that in the one case he is guest and in the other case host, though in some slight measure that is the fact, but because the doctor has far better control of his patient and of his own time at *her* house than in his office. Observe the "her." The majority of calls are from women. When at her house, you ask your questions, make your examination, give your directions, and

go. Prompt, kindly expedition gives a sense of your efficiency and dignity. Rarely is it necessary to stop for gossip.

In your office, on the other hand, you may be at the mercy of a heedless or selfish patient. A very busy consultant, with a trained office attendant, can have patients shown in and out rapidly at the touch of a bell; but the average practitioner, with his small and irregular office practice, must suffer the whims of the heathen. Don't hurt their feelings, unless they be mere humbugs and bores. Bear with them as long as you think proper, then rise and get rid of them by the plain statement that you are busy, or that patients by appointment are awaiting you — as the case may be, and that you will see them again that day week. Some day I must write a book on the miseries of a doctor's consulting-room, from the doctor's point of view.

In these days of trained nurses and social service workers it is comparatively easy to get your directions for treatment carried out in the case of bed patients and of serious illness; but in the case of office patients you are never sure. Don't be mysterious, except, perhaps, with some children. Don't tell your patient to rise at 7.13, to go to bed at

9.48, and to take an unknown pill on the stroke of each half-hour — unless, indeed, such directions are useful to jog his memory. If you are trying to impress him by humbug, he will find you out and dislike you. But take him into your confidence, explain to him the nature of his own case, and what you intend to do for him, and so secure his interest and effective coöperation, — except he be a fool, in which case you must use the axe. Write out full and explicit directions for every patient, whether he has a nurse or not. Thus will you be sure of obedience. The *spoken* word is as snow in the desert.

Another detail of practice which modern methods have made important is the pathologist's examination and report on bits of tissue, and the like, removed from diseased organs, as well as the results of X-ray and other special and difficult examinations. Intelligent and inquisitive patients await these reports with the greatest interest, and often with anxiety. Don't disappoint them. Don't tell them you will send the report on Monday, when you know you cannot send it until Saturday. There's a deal of cruelty in the world. We must not add to it. Send the report at the earliest possi-

ble moment, but make no foolish promises. Explain to your patient that the special expert examiners are not your assistants (as some jobbing practitioners represent them), but are proper and dignified consultants. Then the patient will not be surprised when he receives a consultant's bill for special services.

In regard to that matter of bills and fees, a deal of misinformation and twaddle is published in the daily papers, and there is a quite constant pressure to make it appear that doctors are extortioners. Not long ago an influential Boston newspaper published an editorial which suggested that physicians are in the habit of charging fees according to the location of their offices: "Do not some physicians even now charge according to the locality in which they live, without reference to the nature of the case, and the amount of time and skill expended? There are few doctors who would admit the reasonableness of a sliding scale. The majority charge the servant girl and her mistress alike. There are glorious exceptions, men of marked ability who take the trouble to inquire into the pecuniary condition of a patient, and then charge accordingly, after asking only a nominal sum, that the patient's pride may not be wounded."

As one of our distinguished fellow citizens would say, the main contention in that editorial charge is an unqualified and unmitigated falsehood. With the rarest exceptions physicians make their fees without regard to locality, and they all employ the sliding scale. What humane physician would carry his patient through a severe illness, only to cast him down into the depths of wretchedness at the end, by insisting upon charges which the patient could not pay? Common sense and the claims of his own bank account impel the doctor to a sliding scale. If his charges were fixed and immutable, they would inevitably be low to accommodate his poorest patients. I find that physicians and most surgeons have what they call their standard fee, which they raise or lower, according to the circumstances of the patient and the demands of the case. In spite of sneers, "Charge all that the traffic will bear" cannot be applied to doctors.

There is another side, a familiar side, to this question of fees. Some months ago a cheerful and breezy woman, dressed in handsome furs, brought to see me her little girl, also well dressed. The wardrobes of the two represented a thousand dollars, at least. The child stood in need of a serious

operation, for which, in the case of wealthy parents, the figures four hundred, or five hundred, dollars would be reasonable, considering the responsibility assumed by the surgeon and the immense comfort and relief to be secured by the child. From the first, however, the mother was insistently voluble on the subject of the fee, and vowed that her husband could pay but fifty dollars. I agreed and operated. During the operation the family physician said to me, "What is Mr. Jacobs to pay you?" I told him. "The scamp!" he exclaimed with an angry laugh; "why the fellow's worth a million. He is Jacobs, the great clothier."

By the time my rambling talk was finished, I observed Scholasticus glancing often and furtively at the clock. It was after one, but Primrose's turn had come and he was not to be moved from a final word.

"There is one more situation about which I want to relieve my mind," he said; "but it's a hopeless situation, I suppose. I refer to the blackmailing, especially by women, which is sure to come near every one of us first and last. You don't often hear it mentioned because its details don't always bear public discussion. We all know of the cases, how-

ever; and we know that from trials for breach of promise the results run all the way down the scale of horrors. Honest husbands and devoted wives have been made miserable for life, and families have been broken up by such devil's doings; and there is no redress. You remember how one of our old teachers used to tell us never to submit to a call from a strange female without having one's wife, or some other reliable woman, within hearing. But that's not always practicable for country doctors. It's a hard problem, and perhaps the most maddening part of it is that one's friends smile wisely and think there must be 'fire where there is so much smoke.'"

"Tut, tut," said Ely, yawning; "we'll hear your story to-morrow, Primrose. It's after one, and Scholasticus is asleep."

CHAPTER IV

Some Doctors, and their Troubles

"Common Sense, Tact, the Sense of Humor; those are excellent words," said Primrose, as he reeled in a final bass, "but the qualities are as rare as trout in January. Here's Phillpotts's definition of humor, — I'm never tired of it, though it's been quoted in many books: 'For this *humor* is an adjunct divine, and as far beyond the trivial word for it as "Love" is or "Charity." No definition or happy phrase sums it correctly or rates it high enough; it is a balm of life; it makes for greater things than clean laughter from the lungs. It is the root of tolerance; the prop of patience; it suffers long and is kind; serves to tune each little life-harmony with the world-harmony about it; keeps the heart of man sweet, his soul modest. And at the end, when the light thickens, and the mesh grows tight, *humor* can share the suffering vigils of the sleepless, can soften pain, can brighten the ashy road to Death'"; with which apparently irrelevant words he ceased for the time being.

It was nearing mid-June and we were fishing in Squam waters. Our anchored boat rocked gently on Bear Cove. Evening was falling. Venus glowed in the western sky; the golden glories of the sunset failed. Shadows stretched far across the ripples; and the darkening slopes of the Rattlesnakes lowered in mystic gloom. To the east, Red Hill still held a gleam of day, while the old red farmhouse at its foot glimmered with welcome light.

Primrose's bass was landed, the boat made snug, the anchor raised; Ely took the oars and sculled us slowly back to camp. Our quarters consisted of a cozy bungalow near the head of the cove, in a charming grove of pines, some twenty feet above the water. We kept an accommodating New Hampshire boy about the place, who good-naturedly allowed us to do our own work, while he himself threw in a critical remark as he chewed the occasional straw.

As we sat about our camp-fire that evening, Primrose began: "Some of us doctors have a strange sense of humor and a very odd notion of science and scientific men. The best of us are unfettered and are doing good things, but some of the con-

servative ones, who preside in high places and are called 'professors,' are certainly remarkable beings. You have observed how they sit smug and snug, and teach the old platitudes and quote the old text-books until progress has gone by, when with a groan they catch on as the last car whirls past; not that most of them are wedded to tradition and the doings of former generations; they are not. They know nothing of the history of medicine, but they think they learned something day before yesterday, and they don't want to be bothered with unlearning it."

"What are you driving at?" queried Ely. "Some one in office has been abusing you. Teachers of medicine are n't so bad. I was once one myself."

"Yes, and they pushed you out. Listen to this yarn: A friend of mine has a jolly little ten-year-old boy, whom I have known since his birth. He has always been strong and active, but excitable. Three years ago he had two or three convulsions in the night, but nothing characteristic. The family doctor was away on his summer vacation; so the child's parents began the usual dreary round of calls on specialists. They consulted three or four neurologists and pediatrists; they were told that

the case was clearly epilepsy, and the outlook bad; that there was nothing to do but to diet the boy, keep him quiet, and dose him with bromides. No one gave any real sympathy or help. No one said, 'Put your burden on me; I'll try to carry it for you; and if I can't help, I'll find some one who can.' Nothing of the sort. There was plenty of service in it all, but no humanity. The parents were patient, confiding, and sincere, but that did not count. Finally they fell into the hands of a good fellow, Dr. James (and mind you, all these men were good fellows in the ordinary sense), who personally and solicitously looked after the child for two years. He furnished a competent nurse, regulated the boy's diet and exercises, gave the necessary medicines, and kept him in the country. There was great improvement, and we began to think that the trouble was superficial, after all. Then, a month ago, there were two more slight convulsions. When he heard of them the good fellow of a doctor lost heart and gave his final verdict of hopeless 'ideopathic' epilepsy, whatever that means. The boy's father, who had been doing some thinking on his own account for more than two years, suggested that there are many obscure epilepsies with cause

unknown; that a case of epilepsy due to congenital misplacement and obstruction of the bowel recently had come to his knowledge, after apparent cure had followed appropriate treatment of the bowel; and he suggested X-ray examinations to determine the anatomy of his own boy's vitals.

"What do you suppose our confrère answered? That such examinations are of absolutely no use; that they show nothing; that they lead to nothing; and that they merely encourage false hopes. Does n't it make you want to hide your diminished head, after all the enlightening work that has been done on poisoning from misplaced vitals? Poor James! Osler is right. We pass by early the enthusiasm for new knowledge. At forty-five, James is already an old fogy. He knows literally nothing about this new work; so he says it's 'no good.' What's worse, he does n't want to know. He's simply a competent old-time routinist and he'll never be anything more. You can't blame him. He has reached the limit of his little tether; but you can blame the system. It's the same old situation at which Scholasticus growls, and it will never be better until we have that coöperation of which prophets tell. As for the proposition made

to James, — there may be something in it or there may be nothing. The maddening thing is that he is unwilling to consider it at all. Why? Because it is new."

"Of course, James is a fair sample of a common enough type," replied Ely; "but of late you have seemed to me altogether too pessimistic in your talk about the profession. You know quite well that as a group of men our ethics are sound and our standards high. And I believe that our best standards are maintained by you country doctors. Buncombe and pretension irritate you, and at such things we city men are the worst offenders. Look at our friend Scriba here. He writes a very decent sort of a book on surgery, and gives it to a bustling firm of commercial publishers, who string the country with a series of flapdoodle advertisements, setting forth the virtues of Scriba's very commonplace book. Listen to this, — I have the journal here: 'A Surgery that is different. It is in every particular up to date, and shows that rare quality of accentuating the essential and omitting the unnecessary,' etc., etc., etc. Of course that's rubbish. No self-respecting scientific man wants to be shown up in such a light. Imagine the wrath of a

Warren or a Huxley at finding himself so advertised. Here is a worse one still, booming the personal clinical work of a well-known surgeon.

"'A skilled operator, a natural diagnostician, and a forceful teacher — the qualifications possessed by Dr. Smilax in the highest degree — make his *Surgical Clinics* the *greatest piece of publishing* ever undertaken. They deal almost exclusively with *diagnosis* and *treatment.* These *Clinics* are published just as delivered by Dr. Smilax. In this way they retain all that individual force and charm so characteristic of the clinical teaching of this distinguished surgeon. But the most vital point about these *Clinics* is that they are *absolutely fresh.* They are surgery — right down to the minute, published practically as soon as delivered. There is no stale matter; everything is *new, never having appeared in print before*, and never will appear in print except in this form. Further, you can rest assured that here are facts — *facts only:* definite points in diagnosis; concise, crisp directions in operative technique. . . . *Subscribe to-day.*'

"You may say that all this is merely the work of a vulgar-minded publisher, who knows something of human nature and exploits the medical profes-

sion for his own pocket. And yet *we* are not altogether blameless. We try to be consistent, but we sometimes wind up by being silly. Our most representative medical journal abolishes advertisements of many proprietary medicines because they are humbugs, while it gives its most conspicuous page to such personal advertising gabble as I have just read to you.

"These are extraneous things, though, as is much of which Primrose complains. At bottom doctors are a remarkably clean, honest, straightforward lot. We live too near the facts of life to mistake garbage for gold. Every generation furnishes its Walter Reeds; and the life of one such man steadies every private in our ranks.

"Here's a little story that came to me only last week. We all recognize the sort of thing. Young Coit was a student of mine some four years ago. He hailed from one of those small midland cities, where plain living and high thinking don't count for much. Coit's father was a prosperous business man, who wanted his son to have the best possible education in medicine. There was, besides, a mother and four younger sisters. The son was always a serious, hard-working fellow, but no

prig. He was an oarsman, was well read in general literature, and had been graduated with distinction from Yale. From the beginning of his medical course he showed unusual powers; his anatomical dissections were of the best; his grasp of the meaning of physiological problems was surprising; and equally so was his sympathetic interest in allied subjects. While a student he traveled, visiting other laboratories. He was no blind, contracted, satisfied routinist, but showed a breadth and a comprehension which delighted his teachers, when it did not stagger them. At the same time he kept up his French and German reading, nor did he neglect current English literature. When he chose he wrote charming verses; yet he was no paragon, and the other students made him their class president. He took no interest in marks: he mastered subjects. Of course he was a conspicuous man through his student years, but he was graduated in medicine *third* only in a class of sixty-three. By that time he had made up his mind to devote himself to research, for especially interesting to him were the problems of surgical physiology. To make sure of himself, however, he pushed on with clinical work for a time. He went through the interne courses of two

general hospitals, with credit, and then for a year he held a position in the Rockefeller Hospital in New York. That satisfied him, and so he went to Europe where he spent three profitable years grinding at his physiology in Berlin and London. Is it not a satisfying story? Who could ask for himself or for his son a more stimulating career so far? Wherever he went, Coit made himself felt, and already he had published two significant papers.

"Three months ago the crash came. His father died insolvent, and Coit was called home to take care of his mother and sisters, who are as penniless as himself. He has settled down in his native town to practice general medicine, and to help support those five unhappy women. Perhaps he finds humor in the situation. Certainly his neighbors see nothing hard in it, nor do they understand the kind of man who has come among them. Last week I went out to see him. The tale of personal hardship which had reached me seemed too bad to be accepted — to say nothing of the loss to science. I found him — as you would expect to find such a man — doing his duty, and doing it superbly. His mother is a peevish invalid, who has no confidence

in her son or his 'notions.' She keeps a futile osteopathist hanging about. However, Coit has one sister who is a fine girl. I spent a half-hour in his waiting-room, and heard the usual talk of his few patients, excusing themselves to each other for employing such a youthful doctor. I talked with one of his father's old friends, who informed me that he thinks young Coit will get along; that already he has a few patients, and that his business will look up when old Dr. Bloodgood retires. Fancy it! — Coit, a favorite pupil of Senn and the friend of half the physiologists of Europe! Yes; he'll get along, and you will hear of him yet, if he lives, and his cortex keeps on working."

"Of course," said Primrose, delightedly walking up and down and furiously rumpling his hair, "there are heroes in every profession, in none more than in medicine. I must meet that young Coit, and know more about him. But is it not surprising how the English-speaking world even yet ignores or underestimates scientists as well as literary men? Lister is the only English doctor ever given a peerage. Macaulay got his barony as a politician, not as a historian. Thank God, though; the fools are not all dead. They help to keep us guessing. But

such a story as Coit's renews one's confidence in human nature."

It is a mistake to suppose that doctors have no hobbies. They have as many interests as most men, in these days of narrow interests; and their hobbies are generally of a wholesome kind. To shooting and fishing, commonly, are they addicted, especially in middle life; while tennis and baseball are the joys of many in their earlier years. Nor are the fishing doctors of the contemplative Izaak Walton type, given to fishing because thus they may find time to dream and philosophize; indeed, I find that few doctors have heard of the immortal linen draper, or know whether or not he spelled "The Compleat Angler" with or without the *a*. The doctors fish zealously for the sport of the thing, with all the lusty joy of their ancestors, — happy in the number of their catch, and mendacious as other mortals, when they describe their exploits.

I have often observed that doctors are gregarious. They have no love of solitude or midnight oil. They are given much to marriage feasts, to eating and drinking, and to relaxing themselves in season. This fishing business especially fits them. They

remove themselves to remote places, with others of their kind. They fish, they lead the simple life, and they gossip. The implied oath of secrecy and silence in their relations with mankind in general is omitted in the case of trusted fellow craftsmen; the problems and experiences and trials of the daily round are poured flooding over the patient comrade, who listens or not as he awaits his turn.

On one particular evening of our week at Squam, Primrose was especially loquacious. He had just returned from a meeting of the American Medical Association in Atlantic City, and was full of his experiences. There was little conversation that night. It was all monologue.

Primrose *loquitur*, with feeble gasps of assent or dissent from his audience: —

"Of course every properly qualified doctor in America should belong to the Association. These meetings are wonderful. They're a liberal education. Outside of national politics, and Washington, there's nothing like them. I've been to your Chautauquas and Church Triennials. They're froth and nursery tales in comparison. The generation just ahead of us did us a great wrong when they belittled the meetings of the A.M.A. I re-

member old Dr. Grimm's once saying to me, 'Don't be fooled by all this talk; and don't mix yourself up with that crowd. They're nothing but a parcel of advertisers.' Whatever they may have been once, they're primarily nothing of the sort now; and remember that the Association was started, and was run for years, as it is now, by our most representative men. The whole thing is certainly very well done to-day, and I'm always preaching to the younger men that they should never miss these meetings. Of course I'm an old country duffer, but I confess that I'm full of excitement and interest from the moment I reach the station platform. It's stimulating to see hundreds of men all bent on the same errand as one's self; it's delightful to meet dozens of old friends, and I confess that I often rejoice to shake the hand of some much-talked-of man from Europe who has come here to tell us what he knows. I always try to reach the convention twenty-four hours early, and I spend that free day going about among the men, watching the arrivals, and visiting the House of Delegates. That first evening fills me with delight as I sit in the corridor or smoking-room. What a chance to study types and character! I am growing rather

skillful as an interpreter, and claim that I can tell roughly the region from which a man hails, unless he is a very recent importation there. There's one type that especially interests me, and I'm coming to think it may some day become the common American type, just as Brother Jonathan and the Yankee farmer were once the type. These newer characteristic men come from the Middle West — the Mississippi Valley mostly. Among politicians, look at W. J. Bryan, Champ Clark, Chairman Mack, Urey Woodson, and perhaps Underwood and Folk. They are mostly large, heavy, stooping men, somewhat paunchy, who have not learned properly to walk or to carry themselves, — their immensely productive and laborious lives being given up to other activities. See their clean-shaven faces, their compressed, down-drooping mouths, and their keen, earnest, tired eyes.

"I saw hundreds of such among the doctors at Atlantic City last week; and I heard many of their stories. Sometimes it seems as though they belonged to a different race from us pampered Eastern men. They come mainly from the farm and the village store. I know one fine fellow who started in life as a veterinary surgeon; and another splen-

did useful chap with an enormous surgical practice, who traveled Michigan in his buggy, peddling patent medicines until he was thirty years old. Then some one persuaded him to study real medicine. A friend of mine, one of the most conspicuous surgeons north of the Ohio River, started out to be a doctor thirty years ago. His father was a small farmer up north. He himself knew nothing of the game he was undertaking; so he consulted their old family doctor. Now it happened that their old family doctor was a homœopathist and a graduate of a third-rate homœopathic medical school in St. Louis. Thirty years ago that school was on the verge of collapse, but my friend knew nothing of all that. He did not know that there was any difference between a homœopathist and any other doctor. He looked on his old friend as the source of all wisdom in matters medical, and so by his advice he went to the homœopathic school. Of course, his preliminary education was practically nothing. At the end of two years he was graduated, and began a country practice near Chicago. He is a man of great ambition and boundless curiosity in scientific matters. He reads. Very soon he discovered, as he put it to me, that he was

in the wrong crowd; and certainly that was the wrong crowd thirty years ago. He found that he was not in proper touch with wide medical progress; that his associates did not interest him; that he was not eligible for the American Medical Association; and that his special school was unknown or unrecognized outside of a small radius. More than all, he perceived that he himself was an ignoramus. So after five years he collected his assets, — he was then but twenty-five, — went to Germany, spent seven years at grinding work, and then returned triumphantly, with an education and a proper degree in medicine; while besides his conventional education, he was a trained man who knew how to use his knowledge. Quickly he went to the front, became an important citizen, and has long been one of our most astute surgeons, as you know.

"You see how I enjoy looking up such men as that year after year. You two seem to lose the human side of our annual meetings. You run on for an appointed day or hour, read the paper assigned to you, and then take a night train for home. You should go as I go, and see the thing through. So you get the spirit of the affair. You should visit the different sections and see what men

are doing and thinking. Physiology and medicine are as important as chemistry and surgery.

"It gives one a thrill sometimes to hear a really big man read a truly great paper. I've had the experience twice. Last year, when Browning made his announcement of finding and destroying the cancer parasite, the house rose to him three thousand strong, and that, too, though it was the Surgical Section which knew that the discovery meant a serious loss of business for them.

"Then there's the *machinery* at work all the time, to keep going these meetings and the Association itself. If you stop, look, and listen you can sometimes hear the wheels creaking and groaning. The mere preparation for, and conduct of, such a congress is a tremendous job, and keeps the local committee busy for six months or more. But beyond that, there's always the burning question of electing officers, — especially the president of the Association. There's sometimes as much electioneering, wire-pulling, and marshaling of delegates as though the poor man were going for four years to the White House. He must be of the proper age and the proper distinction, and from the proper geographical region. He must not be too able or too

distinguished; though able men, to their own surprise, do sometimes slip in; and above all, it must be shown that he has trodden on no one's corns. Then there are the followers to be reckoned with, and the rivals to be placated with the promises of future office. Oh, it's a grand game. But after all, it's harmless. It is one method of honoring a popular man, while all the time the real power rests in the trustees, as we call the executive committee.

"Those trustees are very important people, yet I suppose that scarcely one member in five hundred of the Association knows anything about them. They seem to combine both legislative and executive functions; they originate all sorts of new activities, keep a rein on what is going on, and appropriate the necessary moneys. We forget that the Annual Meeting stands for a part only of the work of the Association. The trustees and the various standing committees — like committees of Congress — are busy throughout the year considering all sorts of most important questions, — of legislation and expediency, of public health and instruction, of medical education, of pharmacy and chemistry, and a dozen other similar topics. But I've bored you enough."

"No," said the always polite Ely, rubbing his eyes, "but I think we were to climb Red Hill at four to-morrow morning.

> "'Sweet Phosphor, bring the day;
> Light will repay
> The wrongs of night;
> Sweet Phosphor, bring the day.'"

As we sat on the top of the mountain the next morning, munching our simple breakfast and watching the sun climb up from among the hills, Ely turned suddenly to Primrose and asked what he thought of Bernard Shaw.

"Almost a genius," was the answer; "but, please Heaven, his works will perish with him. At the worst, a piping jigster of narrow vision, his experiences are really few. He has no true knowledge of men or of the world we live in. Can you imagine Shaw rejoicing in this glorious sunrise? He's a yellow journalist in literature. He's a mere critic, — and of a cheap type, in spite of his cleverness. You can't think of him as creating anything. Near-sighted people will speak of him as dangerous until the end of his little day, — for he's a splendid liar and vastly amusing, — and then we'll forget him, as fast as we can. Let's not talk of Shaw."

"It's a letter I got yesterday that suggested Shaw. The writer quoted one of Shaw's unkind remarks about doctors, and then went on to tell of Bumstead's lawsuit. He's been sued for malpractice by a charity patient. I heard a lot about it before leaving home; — indeed I was one of his witnesses."

Primrose absently signified his willingness to listen; so Ely continued.

"There are one or two points in the case that are fundamental or vital. The matter at issue hangs largely on the question of an employer's or surgeon's liability, in these days of intricate operating or elaborate 'team play,' as they call it.

"Here's the clinical story of the case as told to the jury: Some three years ago a poor devil of an Italian cobbler had an attack of gall-stone colic in the middle of the night. (Query; who ever heard of an Italian cobbler before?) He described his sufferings in harrowing detail. No doubt they were severe, for he certainly became a very sick man. The great pain subsided, somewhat, after a day, but he was left with a fever and much soreness. He was then sent by his doctor to a hospital where Bumstead was the surgeon on duty. Two days

later, Bumstead operated; removing gall-stones and draining a badly infected gall-bladder. It was a nasty case, and the patient had a close call.

"The wound did not heal well; a small draining-sinus remained open for months. The man said that during those months he was never free from pain, which is unlikely, of course. During much of this time the patient was Bumstead's private charity patient at his office. Meanwhile the man had become a qualified chauffeur. Finally the *corpus delicti*, the cause of the lawsuit, appeared; the patient got rid of a gauze sponge left in at the operation. In spite of this, his condition did not improve materially. The wound continued open, and finally he went to another hospital, where after some secondary operation the wound eventually healed. Now he sues Bumstead for leaving the sponge in his abdomen, and causing him a year of great suffering; and he sets his damages at ten thousand dollars.

"Of course, on the first hearing, any unprejudiced person would say that the surgeon was at fault and should be made to suffer in his turn; but truly I think that such judgment would be wrong. Evidently this plaintiff and his attorney believed

they had an easy case, for they called no experts, and relied entirely on the unvarnished statement of facts; nor would they compromise, but pushed on for their maximum ten thousand.

"Unfortunately, the situation of 'sponge left in' is no new one. During the past thirty years a large number of these cases have come to light. Nearly every considerable operating surgeon has had one or two; and in regard to the cases, the public, and especially the courts, should ask themselves two questions: how serious a matter is this for the patient, and what is the responsibility of the surgeon for this accident or negligence. In the past, juries have divided, or have found for the plaintiff.

"As to that first question, of damage to the patient, most of the evidence goes to show that the damage is usually not great. The sponge is clean when inserted; through the action of the body's tissues it is soon rolled up into a small ball. If the sponge is connected with a drained wound, it usually keeps that wound open until itself is discharged; or if left in a tightly closed cavity, the sponge seeks some nook where it lies for years without doing harm; or else it penetrates one of the hollow organs, — as in this case, — and so is

discharged. It may occasionally cause a little pain or discomfort, but the cases in which its presence leads to serious damage, or to death, must be rare.

"Now, think for a moment about our second question, — the responsibility of the surgeon. Is he, or is he not, to be held responsible for such a calamity as 'sponge left in'? and if not he, then, who is responsible? It seems as though the best way to get at our answer would be to consider the conditions under which modern operations are done. The conditions are mostly quite new, and little understood by the public, though the methods employed are now in a general way much the same the world over. These conditions are greatly different from what they were a few years ago; and that is a fact which juries, and even judges, find it hard to understand. A few years ago, the surgeon himself, alone, practically unsupported, was everything in an operation. Tradition and fiction are full of familiar situations. Even Ian Maclaren, in 'The Bonnie Briar Bush,' brings to the Highlands a great London surgeon bearing in his hand a trifling bag of instruments, and without an assistant. He brings him, too, to perform a singularly difficult, life-saving operation. Indeed, old-time surgeons, in

the ancient bad days when wound-fever and death were the common results of operating, — old-time surgeons, with their slender equipments, were solely responsible. Themselves surgically unclean, they operated with unclean instruments, in unclean surroundings, on unclean patients. Mostly the operations were simple; body cavities seldom were opened; all operations were rare, and all were momentous: the surgeon did everything himself — cutting, sponging, tying, sewing. He was responsible for every step, and he alone. If anything went wrong, it went wrong under his own eye and hand. So the courts properly held; no employers' liability applied to the surgeon in those days, for the operating surgeon was not an employer in our present sense.

"Look now at the conditions of a modern operation. The surgeon is still the central figure, for the surgeon initiates all the moves, and gets whatever glory or cursing 'is coming.' But a well-conducted modern operation is as much a piece of team work as is a well-played football game. Consider: the progress of the operation has begun twenty-four hours or more before the patient goes to the operating-table. Nurses put him through a process of

dieting, scrubbing, and cleansing. An anæsthetist studies him and advises about the anæsthetic and the subordinate drugs. If all is done well, the patient is brought to the operating-room with mind and body in the best condition for the job. The anæsthetist continues, and produces in him unconsciousness with the most suitable drugs. The patient is then taken in hand by the house surgeon and his assistants, who again scour and cleanse him, and pack him in sterile wrappings. So much for the patient himself. All other persons concerned with the operation must be prepared with equal care, — the surgeon, the first assistant, the second assistant, the one or two operating nurses, and in a large, well-equipped hospital, other subordinate assistants, if such there be. Beyond this care of the individuals concerned, there is the care of the instruments, dressings, sponges, ties, stitches, and other apparatus. In a trial like that of Bumstead's, all this must be made clear to the jury. We must consider especially in his case the question of the use and care of sponges. They are confided to a nurse, whose chief and important business is to keep in touch with them. A definite, known number of sponges are used. They are divided into

groups or bundles, usually of six sponges each. A counted number are handed out by the nurse to the surgeon, for use in the wound; and then, after the operation is over, she collects them, scores up every one, and to the surgeon's regular routine inquiry announces that the 'sponge count is correct,' or some such phrase. Of course this announcement relieves the surgeon of any anxiety or further responsibility, regarding the fate of the sponges. No one is infallible, however, and mistakes, or miscounts by the nurse sometimes happen, as in this case.

"The question, then, is, — Who is responsible in the present case? Obviously and primarily, the nurse. But she is an employee. She is the servant of the hospital. There's the rub. In most of our public hospitals, as at present conducted, the surgeon has no voice whatever in the selection of his nurse assistants. He may have something or everything to say about the subordinate doctors and student assistants, but not a word about the nurses. These operating nurses, good or bad, are thrust upon him. He must suffer for their errors, if errors there be. I dare say this is all unavoidable; I don't know, not being a surgeon; but I can

see how it must put every surgeon in a difficult position.

"On the other hand, in his private practice, a surgeon can make up his own team completely, selecting and training his own operating nurses. When fully developed, such private teams are immensely superior to the public hospital teams. If I make my point, you see, then, that in my judgment the *public hospital* should be held responsible for the errors of its nurses in public hospital operating; while in private operating, the *surgeon* should be held responsible. This question is fundamental, and it's a great shame that the courts don't settle it. In Bumstead's case the jury disagreed, — eleven to one in his favor. The gossip was, later, that the one juror against Bumstead was a crank who wanted to get even with the hospital because his wife died there fifteen years ago. Juries are wonderful things."

"Good, Ely, good," said Primrose, after a pause. "You've told your story very well. But I can't help feeling sorry for that poor devil with a sponge in his stomach."

CHAPTER V

Dr. Primrose on Women

I CAN'T escape from Primrose and his enthusiasms. He has an enthusiasm just now for putting down the Woman Suffrage movement. He's a devoted squire of dames and an admirer of the sex; but the suffrage for women, with all it implies, is a burden which he thinks they should not be compelled to bear. "Let 'em vote," he clamors, "I dare say they'd vote no more stupidly than most *men*. If the vote were all, let 'em have it. But after the vote will come the duties of public office. We shall have ill-conditioned women shrieking to be aldermen and mayors, legislators and governors, judges and senators."

For myself, I am inclined to think that Mr. Roosevelt may be correct when he writes: "I do not regard the movement as anything like as important as either its extreme friends or its extreme opponents think. It is so much less important than many other reforms that I have never been able to take a very heated interest in it." I believe that is coming

to be the attitude of thousands of thoughtful men. They don't altogether like to see women taking part in public life, but they are thinking that the experiment may be worth trying, that women will tire of the obligation, and that probably no great harm will be done. Such men agree with Miss Tarbell when she writes ("Book of Woman's Power"), in substance: "Men and women have always crawled or soared together. The lot of woman is hard, but the human lot is hard. The assumption that the improvement of woman's condition depends upon the vote is quite as unsound as the charge of her inferiority. The woman in industry is, after all, but a transient. A training that will lead her to apply her power with appreciation and enthusiasm to domestic and not political life is what she needs. It is harmful and unsound to believe that woman's position in society would improve in proportion as her activities and interests become the same as man's. This implies that man's work in society is more important and developing than woman's." Again, Mr. Roosevelt writes this refreshing paragraph: "Other fools, advising women to forsake their primary duties and 'go into industry,' prattle about the 'economic dependence' of

the wife. Economic dependence, forsooth! Any husband who regards his wife as 'economically dependent,' or who fails to recognize her as a full partner, needs severe handling by society or the state."

With such thoughts as these in mind, I was somewhat startled by Primrose, who was full of his subject when he rushed in upon me one winter afternoon, some six months after our talk on Red Hill. "My friends the New Hampshire Progressives," he informed me, "are going in for a try at Woman Suffrage. At any rate, they have persuaded the legislature to refer the question to the voters. I tell you, Scriba, the majority of women aren't up to it. It'll be too much for 'em, and they'll leave the voting to the cranks and the unfit."

I told him that I doubted all that; but in order to silence his clamor I asked him to come in later to dine and talk it out.

"That is just what I meant to propose," he said. "Get Ely. I've written down some of my ideas, and I want to read the paper to you. We hear nothing but the positive side of the argument in the public press, to-day. Nothing much is being said about woman's psychology, physiology, and evolu-

tion. The editors are all scared. They think that it is liberal and progressive to shout for women's rights."

And so that evening Ely joined us at dinner; and the ladies, mildly approving, sat with us while Primrose read his piece.

Some Reflections concerning Woman's Suffrage

By Jonathan Primrose, M.D.

"Arguments flimsy and sound on both sides of the interesting question of granting the suffrage to women have been piled high; fists have been shaken now for two generations; households have been made miserable, and sex-antagonism has been created for the first time in the history of the human race. Most of the good arguments for suffrage are too familiar to need recalling, for they are founded on the much-quoted authority of John Stuart Mill, to the effect that every rational adult human being should have a voice in the conduct of democratic government.

"In this connection it is interesting, betimes, to seek some perspective; to view from a distance the great question of human development and to esti-

mate the position at which we are now arrived, — our relation to the past, to the future, and to the world in which we live. To the mass of persons in our world that relationship is without meaning: the thought is as though it were not. Everyday people run in an everyday circle; their feeble notions are bounded by their native town. The concentration of modern life, and the specializing of modern effort curiously contract their horizon.

"The other day a clever collegian said to me: 'What shall I read? I know nothing; I am like a rat in a barrel.' The man in the street is in even worse case. He is like a stranger in a strange city. You cannot make the New Yorker lose himself in New York. Hide him overnight in a back room of a hotel; and for a moment, when looking about in the morning, he may be confused, but quickly he finds himself. From his window he recognizes familiar landmarks. He is on Fifty-fourth Street, or on Washington Square, as the case may be. He goes out on the street; he makes his way uptown or downtown without hesitation. The people about him have the accustomed air; they suit him; he knows what is going on in his little world; he reads his morning paper; he rejoices in its local tone: the

name and doings of the mayor, of the police commissioner, of the latest city enterprise, of the subway stations, of the theatre, — all these things are pleasant to him. He orientates.

"But take this same honest fellow and conceal him overnight in a back room of a hotel on Michigan Avenue, Chicago, — a city unknown to him. What now are his morning sensations? He looks out in confusion upon unknown roofs. The strange street carries with it no meaning; he knows not north from south. Within five minutes of the door, he is lost. The faces he passes signify nothing; he pronounces the morning paper a narrow and provincial sheet; he knows and cares not for the concerns of this dreary town; the shops, the elevated road, the buildings, the theatres are all to him as something vague and unfamiliar; he delivers himself into the hands of the nearest police officer or cabman, and cries aloud for the railway station and a ticket to New York.

"Equally vague are the notions of the average citizen regarding the land in which he lives. The United States of America has a fine sound for him. It is God's own country, he babbles; but he knows little about it, and nothing of the lands beyond its

borders. He has a few shadowy ideas about American geography. With the aid of a time-table, a map, and a Pullman car he can make his way from Boston to Washington; but Washington, when reached, has no special meaning for him. He knows it is the capital of his country, the great headquarters of democratic government; but these are mere words. He knows nothing of how the city came into existence, of its architecture and its vicissitudes. He may know that in Washington are to be found the President, Congress, and the Supreme Court; but talk about the nature of a government expressed in terms of an executive, a legislative body, and a court to interpret the laws and the constitution, is gibberish in his ears. He has a school-boy's knowledge of his country's history; of a Columbus; of a George Washington, of a cherry-tree and a hatchet, of Puritans, Indians, a Boston Tea-Party, a Fourth of July, an American Revolution, bloody-minded Tories, and a wicked King George; but for the life of him he cannot tell you what it was all about. From the adoption of the Federal Constitution to the bombardment of Fort Sumter, all is black chaos to the average American citizen. He knows that the Civil War

was about freeing the negro slaves; and he believes that Lincoln, Grant, Sherman, Jefferson Davis, Grover Cleveland, Lee, John Brown, Daniel Webster, and sundry other worthies had a hand in it. He brings his flabby mind down to modern times, and sees about him a seething mass of ideas, activities, and emotions to him uncorrelated, which leave him unimpressed, or dumb and gasping. What shall he say of labor unions, of the 'trusts,' of political parties, of national leaders, of modern altruism, of the great democratic and socialistic movements towards human betterment; of a revolutionized Church, of modern conceptions of human development, human life and human destiny, of all that modern enterprise in the arts, in science, in invention and literature is bringing to twentieth century men and women? The average citizen has nothing to say to all these things. They flood over him. He hears a name now and again, — like a great bell rung beneath the waves; now and again he rises for air; he sees a glimmer of truth; he hears a word spoken in his own interest; he nods wisely his head; he casts his foolish vote; he shouts his shout. But the meaning of it all never reaches him. He is confused and puzzled by what he hears and

reads. He retires smugly to his hearth and his daily bread, and he tells his wondering children how big and foolish and naughty is this world and the things thereof.

"Such is the average citizen and voter, — the member of the great gray mass, — swayed back and forth by impulse, by hysteria, by fancied interest, by demagogues, anon by an honest man of genius. Such are the masses, the millions, whose votes are equally divided, who impress by their quantity, whose quality is as naught.

"They are not the true rulers and governors set over us, but out of their ranks the rulers come. From the midst of the chaos there is tossed to the surface now and again a superior person, — a man, a leader, a governor. Just as the great gray mass is made up of all sorts and conditions of men, — the rich and the poor, the idle and the toilers, the educated and the uneducated, the virtuous and the vicious, — so the chosen ones, the superior persons who rise by force of intellect, come from no special class, and represent no special interest. The superior ones gather themselves together for mutual support or offense; they control and direct the multitudes from whom they sprang. They rule.

"And now into this seething mass, into this stage of human development, we see injected the question of Woman Suffrage. This question is becoming an important question. There may or may not be truth in the oft-repeated assertion that the woman's vote is coming. So long as woman's vote is immersed in the vote of the great mass, it will be divided and have little influence, for, as David Harum said, there is a deal of human nature in all of us. But woman would not, and doubtless should not, be content with such a situation. The more ambitious women will strive to rise to, and mingle with, the class of superior men, and to take an active part in affairs.

"As the judicious critic hearkens to the debate and views the activities of Woman Suffragists, he is often impressed by the feeling that most of these women have thrown little light on the problem of progress. They carry a feeble candle which sheds a narrow, encircling glimmer on the road, but they fail utterly to illuminate the broad path down which civilization has marched, and they fail utterly to show us the highroad on which we are advancing.

"What is it, then, that women so boldly and confidently demand? Nothing less than an equal share

in the conduct of government. You may grant them the ballot if you choose, and a voice in the direction of local personal interests which touch them nearly; — in the direction of schools, of municipal hygiene, of factories, and the like. Those are practical, everyday questions which concern the immediate comfort and well-being of the women themselves, and women have long proved the value of their services in these fields. But when we consider admitting the women to an equal share with men in great affairs and in the conduct of government, shall we not properly pause and ask what has been accomplished by those *men* whom women would rival or supplant, and what meantime has been *woman's* contribution to human progress? Be it said, at the same time, that woman's excuse of lack of opportunity in the past is a fatuous and misleading begging of the question. The Roman slave Epictetus wrote a book of philosophical reflections which have rejoiced the ages equally with the philosophy of the Roman Emperor, Marcus Aurelius. A poor Syrian carpenter founded a system of ethics, preached a philosophy of life, and established a great religious system which has controlled the Western world for nearly

two thousand years. An obscure Dutch mechanic invented and developed a system of multiplying books which has revolutionized civilization and has made possible the march of human progress. But one need not multiply examples. Most of the great achievements of the human mind have been accomplished by men obscure, down-trodden, little regarded. The prophet and genius does not wait for occasion and privilege. He makes and seizes his own opportunity. He rises above circumstance, and the world hears him from the depths.

"What, then, have the *men* accomplished through ten thousand years of progress? They have invented and established civilization; they have developed agriculture and commerce. They have perfected navigation and transportation; they have developed a world-wide system of finance; they have invented, if they have not perfected, the arts of architecture, sculpture, painting, and music. They have conquered and colonized the world; they have devised and perfected a glorious literature, they have created splendid philosophies; they have adopted and formulated great religious systems; they have conceived of honor and human brotherhood, and they have established that greatest work

of man, the court of justice. Through the spirit of modern altruism they have sought out the down-trodden; on a great scale they strive to relieve the afflicted; they have established popular education; they have developed scientific medicine; they have immensely mitigated the sufferings of the human race; they have developed science and invention; they have explained the secrets of the earth, and the history of the past, the facts of nature, and the mystery of the stars; they have conceived of a true democracy, and they have established and conducted happily great systems of beneficent government.

"These are no small matters; the record is far from complete; but such as it is, the work is the work of men, and of men only. The great, prophetic, creative master-minds are the minds of men. Women's names do not appear. These things must needs be said. It is in the face of such overwhelming facts that one reflects on the mingled pathos and audacity of some of the Suffragists' demands.

"It will be protested that women have shone in some of the fields of great human endeavor. They have so shone, but never has their light dazzled the world. The other day in Cambridge a distin-

guished woman astronomer died. She was famous for minute and painstaking studies of statistics, for interpreting stellar photographs, for compiling data. No woman has founded a great scientific system; the women have produced no Confucius, no Galileo, no Newton. The strong, sane, penetrating minds among them range another field. They are close, exact, microscopic, while the minds of the great men among us are generous, wide-ranging, telescopic, if one may phrase it so.

"The progress of mankind and their happiness are dependent on other things, however, than the great achievements I have named; and towards that progress women's contributions have been great, if not priceless. The bearing and rearing of the human race alone would place woman on a plane higher than that occupied by mere physical man, but she has done more; she has concentrated, coördinated, and made permanent and coherent the civilization carved out by man. Without this work of woman, civilization could not persist. Wherever and whenever woman has been debased or abolished, civilization has withered and failed. Such is the teaching of history. Among those peoples and races where woman has been down-trodden, progress has

languished; and chaos, ignorance, cruelty, and vice have usurped the place of generous enlightenment. The story of Oriental civilization shows this; for with those Eastern peoples the debasing of woman and the development of a semi-barbarism went hand in hand. Among the ancients, — the Greeks and the Romans, — the fall of woman and the degeneration of empires coincided. The brutal wars of mediæval and modern times, while they destroyed the influence of woman, coincidently halted and put back progress. In our own country no permanent establishments were made by explorers, colonists, or pioneers until woman came to join in the work.

"This surprising and convincing influence of woman has been subtle but effective. About women have gathered the fundamental elements which make for permanence and advance, — the conception and establishment of the roof-tree and the home; of the family, the tribe, the village settlement, the state, and the nation. For her and for the children men have fought and died that she and her ideals might endure. Her influence has confirmed and cemented every forward step. For her have been wrought the arts of peace, through the

establishment of which the great accomplishments of mankind have been made possible. In all these matters woman has been no idle observer, no passenger, as we say. She has taken an active, strenuous, and unceasing part. She has advised, admonished, and approved. She has bestowed rewards; she has stood for comfort, sanity, and happiness. Without her coöperation, man in his forward struggle would have come to naught and have ceased. With her coöperation, we see supplemented and made effective the toil of man. Through the ages men and women have stood together, shoulder to shoulder, and have created the good world in which we live.

"So it comes about that if a sound development of the historic sense and a broad outlook upon the world teach us anything of the relations of men and women, and of the capacities and achievements of both, it is that the sexes supplement and support each other. Neither can successfully break into or take over the other's work. Physiology teaches this; psychology confirms it. Man at his best, in his greatest expression, is prophetic, judicial, compelling, creative. Woman is faithful, patient, enduring, supporting, generous, conservative. Through jus-

tice and sanity man has constructed democracy. You cannot democratize woman. Man builds; woman conserves; and an unhalting progress in social uplift results."

We all applauded.

"That's a good piece, Primrose," said Ely; "you ought to publish it."

"I've tried to publish it, but the editors won't take it."

"Why?"

"They're afraid of it, I think. I sent it to 'The Antarctic Monthly.' The editor flattered me, but said the public were tired of the subject. Then I sent it to the weekly 'Forecast' in New York. The editor returned it with thanks. Two weeks later our most distinguished fellow citizen published in that journal an article on the same subject; but it was a mild utterance. I observed, too, that he did not altogether agree with the veteran editor-in-chief."

"You know, of course, that that article is not going to add to your popularity."

"I don't know; for I don't yet know which is the popular side."

"You will find, I think, that the women divide themselves broadly into three social groups or classes, — just as civilized mankind has always and inevitably divided itself into three classes, — the 'upper,' the 'middle,' and the 'lower.' It's an artificial thing, — a question of money-getting capacity on some one's part, and the ability to keep it. The upper class among women have come to see that the suffrage has little in it for them, so long as it is not limited to property-holders; the lower class are too serious and too busy with the personal problems of daily life to think or care anything about the suffrage. The result is that the question is left mainly in the hands of the great seething middle class, with women especially more or less unattached or unemployed. These vigorous and kindly souls are bestirring themselves, not only for themselves, but for their less fortunate sisters. That great middle class will not like your saying that the women have done none of the big constructive things. They'll point to Joan of Arc, Queen Elizabeth, George Eliot, and Queen Victoria. I'm glad I have not to settle the question you've attacked. My patients and consultants give me plenty to do."

"But that's absurd. Those four women constructed nothing."

"Of course not."

"Then why —?"

"Exactly; why? That's the one trouble with the whole situation. I advise you to let it alone. It's probably not the great issue that some people think it. It's a means, not an end. The end we should have in view is good government. *Vox populi, vox Dei*, may be true, — I don't know. It's the best thing we have found yet; generally, but not always."

Primrose sat silent for a few minutes. Then he said: "If this is a great movement it is the first great movement, right or wrong, which has had no great leaders. Think of some of the great reform movements of modern times: the Reformation with its Luther, its Wycliffe, and its William of Orange; the great Civil War of England, with Hampden, Pym, Cromwell; the American Revolution and Constitution building, with their Washington and Hamilton; the French Revolution, with its Voltaire, Rousseau, Mirabeau, and the rest; the Reform of the Suffrage in England eighty years ago, and the strong men who debated it; to say

nothing of our Slavery problem and the Civil War, with the great men, and women, too, on both sides. Those were truly mighty questions that produced their giants, but I don't see any one above five feet two in the present scramble."

"I dare say. But keep cool. And first let us see the result of your New Hampshire referendum.

> "'For forms of government let fools contest;
> Whate'er is best administered is best:
> For modes of faith let graceless zealots fight;
> His can't be wrong whose life is in the right.'"

CHAPTER VI

The Doctor is a Patient

My friend Primrose has been ill. The busy doctor has for months been turned in upon himself. He has forgotten the Woman Suffrage trouble as a trouble; and he has taken to analyzing life through his own glasses. He looks back in these days to his long neglected "Religio Medici"; and he talks about the mysteries of the unknowable as though, indeed, they were very present with him. He quotes with gusto Sir Thomas Browne: "The Devil, that did but buffet St. Paul, plays, methinks, at sharps with me. Let me be nothing, if within the compass of myself I do not find the battail of Lepanto, Passion against Reason, Reason against Faith, Faith against the Devil, and my Conscience against all. . . . As Reason is a Rebel unto Faith, so Passion unto Reason: as the propositions of Faith seem absurd unto Reason, so the Theorems of Reason unto Passion, and both unto Reason. Yet a moderate and peaceable discretion may so state and order the matter, that they may be all Kings,

and yet make but one Monarchy. . . ." And so he concludes serenely in cheerful optimism.

He has taken to much letter-writing and he copies from voluminous journals: —

My dear Scriba, — You will wonder that I have been so long silent, but indeed my Pride hath had its fall; though I trust that

> "my way of life
> Is (not yet) fallen into the sear, the yellow leaf."

My doctor friends, with cruel kindness, have turned upon me; three months ago they put me to bed, and in bed I remain. Of them all, Ely is the only one of humanity and intelligence. It seems that I played the mischief with that clock inside my chest, and so I have at last fallen upon evil days. When I'm ill, though, I think of our dear old chum Optimus in Ohio. I know you loved him. For me he was the greatest physician in the land. Read this: it is the letter he sent me when he heard that I was laid low three years since. Perhaps it may help you or your patients some day. It gives me a strange thrill to think that he himself has gone before, leaving us to keep up the fight: "Dear Jack, — George has just been down to see me, very unhappy over your

letter. I have been showing him what James Mackenzie says about prognosis in his wonderful new book on Diseases of the Heart, and have sent him off in a much more cheerful frame of mind; and I want to send on to you some of Mackenzie's optimism. To begin with, get somebody to read to you, on page 257 of his book, his history of the mechanical engineer who twenty-six years ago, at thirty-two, had rheumatism, and was left with a mitral lesion; fourteen years later he lay for weeks unconscious with dropsy; from this he recovered with all kinds of heart murmurs and irregularities; but none the less, since, and up to date, he has been doing the laborious work of his profession as well as anybody. We doctor-folk, with our stethoscopes, are apt to take too grave a view of the extent of restoration possible in recent heart lesions. The general practitioner who follows his people through their illnesses and long afterwards, or who, like myself, has inherited patients from father and grandfather, knows how long a life and how active a one a man may lead who has seemed hopelessly invalided when his rheumatic heart lesion was new. The long stay in bed at the first, with massage and resistive movements by and by, to strengthen the skeletal and

heart muscles, are therapeutic tricks our fathers, too, did not know; and unquestionably the rest lessens the puckering and shrinking of a valve scar. I should like to talk to you about patients. Two years ago a man of about your age had a rheumatic fever, and developed both mitral and aortic lesions. I shook my head over him, and told his friends what your doctors are saying to you. He stayed in bed three months, and went slow for a year; but now he is in the hurly-burly again, and likely to live a life of activity for years so far as I can see. . . . I hope Dr. Samson has been well enough to see you. He is the chap I should like to have talk to me, if I lay on my back with a heart lesion, and wanted to know what the future held. But inevitably the doctor's stethoscope scares him, and misleads him in estimating the significance of recent lesions. . . . And then, if you are left like a cup with a crack in it, that is the one that outlasts the rest of the set, if it is kept out of boiling water. Did you ever read Weir Mitchell's charming essay on convalescence? You have resources enough to make a 'pleasant land of counterpane' for yourself, I know. Now I'm off for Bermuda with the boy. Good-bye. As ever, yours, E. F. O."

"*Omnem crede diem tibi diluxisse supremum*" was truly part of Optimus's creed; but I cannot help feeling that that brave fellow's death was an offense to medicine. And does it not give one a catch in the throat to read those fine, ringing, inspiring words, posthumous, as it were, from a man who led the life for all there is in it. That was a physician of the sort for which the world will always cry, — of a species almost extinct. Useful and self-sacrificing as are many of our laboratory men, I am growing a little tired of hearing them proclaimed the heroes of medicine. What in civil life could be more heroic than the career of Optimus? With a mind of the finest, and the whitest of souls; generous as a woman, gentle-spirited as a child; worldly-wise from long training, but great-hearted, charitable, and infinitely kind, — his was a character of which it is an inspiration to think. He was splendidly equipped for his work. His broad interests and wide-ranging thought interpreted the needs of the time. He was brilliantly qualified to practice either as surgeon or physician, for such was his training. Finding to hand, however, a surgical colleague of sympathetic mind and progressive views, Optimus abandoned surgery,

and for twenty years devoted himself constantly, untiringly, generously, superbly to that humble calling — the practice of general medicine. Modest, retiring, silent, he did his own work and no other. In a measure he had his reward. In all things medical, and in much else, the great community in which he lived became his devoted subjects. In any field of service he would have shone. He might even have emulated yon capering Smilax, of whom you tell. He might well have been a national figure; but he was content with a career which the absurd fiction of to-day regards as humble and commonplace. He was simply useful. His was a life of service to thousands of his fellow men.

There is a saying that every life, however commonplace and humble, may be of supreme interest, and carry its great lesson, if that lesson be but properly told. Here was a life abundantly worth the telling.

"He had kept
The whiteness of his soul, and thus men o'er him wept."

This letter is degenerating into an epistle, but I find there is a lot I want to say. Perhaps it is the familiar sick man's garrulity; and yet, like the patient "coming out of ether," I want to tell all

about it, for I am sure that no one else has had such a unique experience. In the first place, I am at last convinced in my own person that one may drift into alarming and serious illness without special discomfort. We doctors all know how there is rarely any such thing as the traditional "death-agony," because most people become unconscious long before they die; but we sometimes forget that other fact about serious illness. Of course sickness is as natural a process as are birth, death, and decay; and I suppose some day, when Almoth Wright and the others have worked out their problem beyond peradventure, showing the organism that causes the given patient's disease, and by the opsonic index, his exact powers of resistance, that then we can increase his resisting powers at will, and play up and down the scale with every feeling of assurance.

My friend, I was *sick;* not merely "ill," as our English friends would say — for they do corrupt and turn to contemptible uses the good old Anglo-Saxon speech; I lay on a "sick-bed," in a "sick-room"; I was truly on "sick-leave," and the "sick-list," and I experienced many new things. Was it not our old James Jackson who wrote that no physician could

regard himself as thoroughly competent to practice medicine until he had experienced a serious sickness in his own person? We are wont to say that a period of severe sickness seems a nebulous period afterwards. Perhaps so. But this time I declared to myself that no detail should escape me or be forgotten, and I think I succeeded in my resolve. After six months of unwonted feebleness, with increasing shortness of breath, rapidity of pulse, and failing mental vigor, I finally consulted Ely, who told me that I had tachycardia, which I knew; with a dilated heart, which I had suspected; and sent me to bed under the immediate care of one of my kind neighbors here. Since that time — three months ago — I've lain in bed with reasonable cheerfulness, and have observed life. I've made some study of sick-room attendants, especially of doctors and their ways. I've been under the care of, or been visited by, eight or ten of the faculty, and on the whole I've concluded that they are a fine set of fellows. There is a tradition that doctors make bad patients. I think I've disabused my friends of that notion. I am sure I have been a fairly good patient, and I am not sure but what that is true of most men. You remember that when we were

hospital house-officers the experienced nurses used to say they would rather take care of a ward full of men than a ward full of women; because, in the case of acute illness, men are so much more docile — less critical, less peevish, less fault-finding. Men don't know much about illness. Nowadays they have little experience in the nursery. That does not seem to be a part of their job. The atmosphere of the sick-room is woman's own. Why is it, then, that women are not the great doctors, the great clinicians? I sometimes ask myself. Perhaps because they have been at the business too short a time to have gained the proper assurance. But it seems as though there must be some inherent reason; otherwise, during the seventy years or more that women have been going into medicine, they would have produced at least one great physician. They will do it yet, I feel sure they will do it yet. I doubt if they have had half a chance until now. Johns Hopkins is educating them alongside of the men. Let us await developments there.

For myself, I presume I have been peevish enough, and a grief to my friends. Though I seem to have the whole experience in memory, still there are one or two knock-out features; especially a

sense of overwhelming unreality, as though one were another person. I suppose the simple explanation of that is the variation in the intracranial blood pressure — an entirely natural phenomenon, accentuated at times by hyperactivity of the heat centre; for, mark you, rheumatism and fever have added variety to my lot. The other most pronounced and interesting feature of illness, I find to be the astonishing feebleness. I fancy that explains the unaccountable alarm which many men, as contrasted with women, display in sickness. With men in sickness the variation from normal health is much the greater. A majority of women are accustomed to a certain amount of ill-health, or at least to recurring periods of depression, lassitude, and feebleness. Prostrating disease for them is no such stunning surprise as for men. So the men for a time protest and complain in most unhandsome fashion. I don't think that I showed any improper alarm, but I admit that for a time I was undone mentally as well as physically; and that, to my shame and disgust, I found myself taking a jabbering interest in my own symptoms, and hanging on to my doctor like a sailor to an upset dory.

Perhaps the most distressing, even humiliating part of the whole experience for me was the sick-bed toilet. That, I suppose, is a matter of individual temperament; but for me, to have a young woman eternally hanging about, bossing me, entering without knocking, violating my privacy, brushing my teeth, washing my face, and rubbing my legs was intolerable. And then, her reading aloud! She never tried it but once. I am sure that the modern trained nurse is a great comfort to the doctor; and I know that my specimen is a good and superior girl, for she's a neighbor's daughter, and used to play in my back garden; but upon my word, it seems at times as though the Devil was in her. She hangs around during the doctor's visit, and "makes remarks." She bustles from the room with him, and holds him in long whispered consultation outside my half-open door. She returns with an air of superior knowledge; and she actually has the effrontery to tell me not to be nervous. Worst of all, she munches apples in my presence, and she sleeps in my room and snores. Yes; I suppose I am nervous, as she tells me to my face.

Is it not a dreary and sordid tale? And yet there are compensations. When I was at my

worst, they thought it would be a good thing to have a doctor in the house for a few days; so Ely sent up young Flaxman. You remember, the clever chap in the disreputable suburban office, whom you advised to find proper quarters, become a professional, and marry a wife. He's not yet found the wife, as you know, but in other respects he has found his feet and is trig, smiling, and human. He did me a power of good, and I am not sure but what he "pulled me through," as they say.

I told him that I had heard of him, and asked if he had moved his quarters. Yes: it seems he moved into the next block a week after your visit. His cross landlady would hardly let him go without searching his trunk, while the "collarless drab" put on some forlorn neck-gear, and burst into tears as she packed his shirts. He now lives in a smart little apartment of his own, drives a motor, and tells me that his practice trebled last year. Mrs. Primrose and the children felt that they could not let him go, and I fancy he took all their hearts with him. Apropos, what father knows his own daughter?

Now, my friend, I am convalescent; that is the wonderful fact I have to tell; and you must come

to see me. The winter is over; spring is at hand; by six of the clock the sun now crowns the peak; the sap runs eager in the trees; buds sprout from willow boughs along the brook; a soft and tender green enshrouds the hill, the streams rush full, and crowd the jealous bank.

> "And this reviving Herb, whose tender Green
> Fledges the River-Lip on which we lean —
> Ah, lean upon it lightly! for who knows
> From what once lovely Lip it springs unseen!"

There's no one like dear old Fitzgerald to translate some of our thoughts. And how wonderful is this spring-time of returning health! Your heart beats full and strong; you feel no anxious flutter in the chest; your breathing's like a child's — regular, deep. You sleep as boyhood sleeps — hour after hour. Haply you eat — the gods provide the food; Ceres attends; you shake off vulgar cares; the merry, merry days of youth seem for the moment gently to return. You hold a cherished hand; some soft emotion thrills your moistened eyes; old friends, old books, old thoughts engross your heart; you sigh and smile; again the world is yours. Such is the measure of my great content, and you must share it. We've much to say. I've

read some books while you've been reading men. Bring Ely, if you can; the time for talk has come.

That very next Saturday afternoon Ely and I reached Poquonnock Village for a week-end with our old friend and his family. We left the stage — ten miles from the railway — at the foot of his rambling street, and strolled to his house. The joy of the land was all that Primrose said. The clear upland air, the soft wind with a suggestion of summer in its caress, the smell of new-turned soil, the delicious warmth of the kind embracing sun seemed indeed to restore our youth. Ely, emancipated, frisked like a puppy. He took off his hat, and stretched and shouted. He cast from him his coat to my devoted back. He capered in the middle of the road, to the dismay of a patient ox team approaching; and his happiness was complete when he discovered a stately and solemn procession of geese debouching in single file upon our path. Immediately he named them, — Obadiah, Amos, Barnum, Savonarola, Mr. Carnegie, and Mary Baker Eddy. He assured me that Mr. Carnegie was the only one in the flock with a sense

of humor, and he proceeded to prove his point by bombarding them gently with a shower of pebbles.

The gabble of the geese and the shouts of Ely were at their height when a peal of laughter and a call upon our names came to us from a buggy which trotted past. A girl waved her whip at us and a young man raised his hat.

"Upon my word," said Ely, flushed and sedate, "that's my friend Marion Primrose; and the man is Flaxman, the rogue. Observe me, Scriba, — for I claim to be as knowing as a woman in these matters, — *there's* a match. From Flaxman now let me depart in peace. His destiny and your prescription are met. His future's safe." The buggy was disappearing around the curve. The girl's big hat, well-poised whip, and upright figure seemed set at "attention"; while beside her the young man's head was bent, and his right arm thrown over the back of the seat in privileged lover fashion. "And a good thing, too; a good thing," said the astute Ely, as he wagged his foolish bachelor head.

Almost in silence we strolled on up the hill after this, though an occasional muttering at my side assured me that Flaxman was a young villain, that

Marion Primrose was a sweet thing, and that that arch plotter Ely was content.

As we turned in at the Primrose gate, a little whirlwind came down behind us, and a manly voice chanted the sturdy lines of a great American epic: —

"There was ease in Casey's manner as he stepped into his place,
There was pride in Casey's bearing, and a smile lit Casey's face;
And when, responding to the cheers, he lightly doffed his hat,
No stranger in the crowd could doubt 'twas Casey at the bat."

But even an engagement in the family could not long keep our old friend Primrose from his favorite topics. Of course he was glad to see us, and his eyes glistened with kindly emotion and a loyal welcome as he held our hands. We learned that Flaxman had been regarded for some weeks as one of themselves; that the wedding would take place in June; and that the young couple would live in the Poquonnock neighborhood. An important endowed hospital had been opened in the near-by town of Asphodel, with Primrose and Flaxman respectively as physician and surgeon-in-chief.

Primrose is a person of unappeasable curiosity. It seems that there has been recently a serious strike among the mill operatives in one of our New England towns. Primrose thinks that he is half a Socialist, as is Flaxman altogether; so the younger man was straightway packed off to the mills to study the situation. We all sat round the great open fire in the library that evening discussing the affair. Flaxman, with a good deal of earnest excitement, told his story, and Primrose expressed general views. It was all trite enough, I dare say, and of small value to experts; but for the audience of uninformed city doctors it was novel and thrilling.

Flaxman, while investigating, had met Weyl, the well-known correspondent, to whose superior knowledge he owed much. As the correspondent wrote later: "The strike came suddenly. The Legislature had passed a law reducing the hours of labor from fifty-six to fifty-four, and the mill-owners, without warning to their employees, reduced wages in a like proportion. It was a ruthless, immoral, ill-advised proceeding. It was ruthless, because wages already were indecently low. . . . They are far lower, here as elsewhere, than the

cost of living and the demands of our American civilization imperatively require. It was immoral, because the method of reduction was that of a despotic master deciding, according to his sole will, the fate of his subjects. It was ill-advised, because it revealed to an already irritated American public the other side of Schedule K. It showed that the woolen manufacturers were obtaining a high protective tariff under the false pretense of benefiting American labor. I have rarely seen in any American city so many shivering men, without overcoats, as I have seen in this cloth-producing town."

With such views Flaxman was in sympathy. He had found a community of many nationalities, and little English spoken; but with the exception of a few hot-heads the people — German, French, Flemish, Italian, Syrian, and the like — were peaceable and kindly, debating the situation with anxiety, but with entire good temper. A large body of militia had been called out to keep order, but they found little to do. Yet here is an economic situation, as Flaxman declares, which has advanced almost beyond the limits of human endurance; and again he quotes Weyl: "To-day, to-morrow, and year after year in America the

question raised at the conference between legislators and strikers will rise up against us, 'What can the State do? What can we do to make the wrong right for the people of our mills and factories?'"

This sort of discussion could not have been a good thing for Dr. Primrose in his feeble state. He restrained himself, as best he could, however; but at last with a flash, and his old-time quiver he broke in: —

"Public men and newspapers, from Mr. Roosevelt down to the editor of 'Barker's Weekly,' have been doing a powerful lot of talking of late years about Socialism and its dreadful dangers. What do they mean? I'd like to know. Or what do they think they mean? They don't define Socialism. No one does. Socialism is not Anarchy, as most of them seem to think. Our most respectable people, whenever they get a little frightened, or dislike some political movement of their opponents, go into hysterics, and tell us to look out for Socialism. Our ordinary politicians are the most irritating. The average Representative in Congress is a gaby, with facility for stringing words together in pompous and regular cadence. Socialism is his word of words. He's uneducated, of course. He has no

vision. He has no expression of patriotism in the wider sense; though the pathetic fellow in his soul really thinks he has patriotism itself. Fortunately, from time to time he has wit enough to choose superior leaders, otherwise would representative government go to wreck, in spite of harking back to such panaceas as *referendums*, *initiatives*, and the like.

"I'd like to know something more about that Socialism bogy. Many of us would. I observe that several millions of our fellow creatures call themselves Socialists, and that a great many of them are keenly intelligent persons. I suppose that the Germans of to-day are, as a people, the most widely educated, the most philosophical, and perhaps the most wise in practice. It's fair to say that more than half of them are Socialists. Our own present industrial, economical, and social condition is not so fine that we should wish to perpetuate it. Through trade and class prejudices the groups of our people are drifting further and further apart. Compared with what the fathers of the Republic knew, the present industrial situation is horrible.

"I've just been reading some stuff in a Boston

newspaper. The writer assures us that the 'Progressive movement is responsible for the strike.' Then he goes on to say: 'All agree that the strike is a symptom of advancing Socialism. . . . The appeal to the passions of the mob is bred by the demagogic propaganda of the La Follettes, the Hearsts, the Fosses, and others of their ilk, who would destroy the basic principles of Government.' What do you suppose the simple lunatic thinks he means by *basic principles of government?* The framers of our Federal Constitution had no intention of establishing an industrial order that puts millions of women and children practically at the mercy of a few gigantically rich capitalists. Then our friend the newspaper man goes on to write these glowing words: 'The present progressive movement is a movement in the direction of Socialism. The strike was not needed to prove that. . . . Those who believe in Socialism will help the movement along. Those who believe in the established order will halt while there is time.' Words, words, words, you see."

At this Ely began to grumble a little: "I think you're too hard on our Congressmen. They're not such a bad lot of fellows. And as for the newspaper

writer, — I'm much inclined to agree with him. All this talk about tearing up the Constitution is terrifying to us old fellows."

"I don't want to tear up the Constitution," Primrose almost shouted. "I want to see something done to wipe out some of the terrible disparity of living. Our history books tell a dreadful story about the conditions in France before the Revolution. I declare, except for the presence of the ballot, the conditions in some of our mill towns to-day are not so very different. When you see employed operatives shivering and starving in 'good times,' and their daughters by the thousands driven to the life of the street, you know that something is wrong. You have no right to draw the shutters, comfortably to fold your hands, and settle down before the fire, in the face of these things. I sometimes think that the man who does so is either a fool or a traitor; and yet I don't think that I am a ranter or a demagogue.

"But let us get away from this alarming side of the subject. I don't yet feel equal to it. There are mild questions involved, rather academic of their kind. In the Presidency of Washington, who seems, by the way, to have been one of the richest

men in the country, the distinction between his rate of living and that of the poorest New Hampshire farm laborer was measurable. Each had enough to eat and enough to wear; perhaps the luxuries of the one were the necessities of the other. But the brain, the abilities, and the services of the one were immeasurably greater than those of the other. The same was, as a rule, true of all prosperous men in those days. There resulted none of that class bitterness which we know. The wealthy merchant, the squire, the parson, the farmer, and the laborer met on equal terms at the store or the tavern, and a kindly harmony prevailed. The poor man recognized facts and limitations.

"The present disparity between the lots of the highest and the lowest is so great that it seems as though it could not long endure: Your mill-operative, the father of a family, — 'unskilled,' he is called, — earns *four hundred* dollars a year; your skilled operative earns *nine hundred* dollars. Mind you, I'm talking averages; not about the fancy pay of such specialists as locomotive engineers, high-class chauffeurs, and a few others. At the other end of the intellectual scale come your college presidents; men who lead anxious, responsible,

laborious lives, — your Garfields, Hydes, Wilsons, and Eliots; they are paid from *five thousand* to *ten thousand* a year. Please take a great jump now — not at all in the intellectual but in the pecuniary scale, and you come to your pork-packers, your beef-barons, your captains of industry in steel, oil, tobacco, sugar, and the like. The top pay among these men, — and they are truly able and far-seeing, the best of them shouldering immense responsibilities, and toiling always, — their top pay, including of course the return on investments, ranges between *one hundred thousand* and a *million* dollars a year.

"So let me ask you again the old question not yet truly answered, — what is there in the nature, the intellect, the work, or the services of one of these last which should entitle him to *one hundred* times the pay of an Eliot, or to *one thousand* times the pay of a skilled operative? Is our system rational?

"But, you will say, the work and the services of an Eliot, and of thousands of other devoted brain-workers in this world, cannot be measured by dollars. Exactly; and that brings me at last to the two questions in this Socialism debate, which

I have never heard properly discussed: first, is individual effort to be measured inevitably by dollars? and second, in a Socialistic State, would not the educational opportunities and training of all the citizens be fair and equal?" [1]

Upon this Ely rose up in very wrath: "Jonathan Primrose, this will never do. Off with you to bed. It is ten o'clock. If this madness continues, we may hear you again to-morrow."

[1] It appears that the conceptions of present day advanced Socialists are unfamiliar to Dr. Primrose. He seems to talk of abolishing money, and cherishes old-fashioned popular notions and Utopian dreams. The view of Socialism as an enterprise for a collective owning of the tools of industry and a collective distributing of its products is strange to him. — SCRIBA.

CHAPTER VII

Dr. Primrose on Socialism

SUNDAY is still a day seriously to be observed in Poquonnock Village. The traditional quiet settles upon the lovely valley. You may hear remote tinklings from the distant herd upon the hills, or down the rocky road the lazy shuffle of old Joe and Frank, the farm-horses released from plow, bringing the family to the meeting-house. By ten o'clock the place is all astir, and scattered groups collect about the church, — the postmaster and his wife, the keeper of the country store with his ten children, the blacksmith, the carpenter, the farmer-deacons with their women-folk; and last, the doctor's family — friends of all. Here were Dr. Primrose's beloved people, of whom he chose to tell. Of all the world their fate concerns him most. Two generations seem to have gone back; these are the folk of sixty years ago. One thought almost that they should be discussing the doings of their famous neighbors, Daniel Webster, Horace

Greeley, and President Franklin Pierce. Surely, says the doctor, with our traditions and our great names on the state roll, the glory of New Hampshire must return. To-day, of course, our friend does not appear. His health forbids. His anxious patients ask for him, and smile in satisfaction at the news.

True to his patriarchal character, Dr. Primrose is an old-fashioned believer in revealed religion, though he looks for increasing tolerance, and prays sincerely on bended knee for a united Christendom. Of all our authors, perhaps he loves best Sir Thomas Browne, whose wise lines he recites: "Holy water and Crucifix deceive not my judgement, nor abuse my devotion at all. I am, I confess, naturally inclined to that which misguided Zeal terms *Superstition.* My common conversation I do acknowledge austere. . . . Yet at my Devotion I love to use the civility of my knee, my hat, and hand, with all those outward and sensible motions which may express or promote my invisible Devotion." Our kind friend has a joyous faith; he believes his fellow men to be loyal and sound, and he worships his God always in such words as he read to us this morning at family prayers: "The

heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament showeth his handiwork."

Just now, however, his mind is sorely tried, and his faith in man put to the test. To him fair play and honest sportsmanship are a second religion, and he fears that the group of money-making, potent, forceful men, who control the industries and the markets of the world, are drifting far from fair play and honest sportsmanship. He even whispers sadly that he believes some of them to be not only unpatriotic but dishonest. He thanks Heaven for the hundreds of fine exceptions. He quotes the good deeds of well-intentioned, pathetic restitution — as he calls them — of the Goulds, Carnegies, Rockefellers, and the like. He glories in the fine career and noble democratic frankness and fairness of such a man as Richard F. Crane; not because he built up a mighty business and devised by will millions to his employees, but because he did not make his money at the expense of his fellow creatures. I remember Primrose quoting from "Collier's Weekly" a paragraph about Crane: "Once he noticed that some of his men were doing sand-blasting with helmets on their heads. It seemed to him an unhealthy occupation, and he

ordered a change to a method much less profitable to himself. Frequently he told his branch managers not to push business too hard in competition with weaker opponents. . . . It was his principle and his practice never to be hard towards employees, competitors, or public. Although he lived to see his business become enormous, he never regularly retained a firm of lawyers. He did not fight his fellow creatures, but helped them. . . . He never asked or needed tariff favors. He was an honor to the business world and to the country in which he lived."

A fine act need not be conspicuous in order to stir Primrose to the depths; indeed, one of his favorite occupations is the collecting from obscure newspaper columns accounts of self-sacrifice and devotion among the humble and unknown. His is a whole-souled patriotism. He cannot endure long to be absent from his native land and his home state; and with Van Dyke, —

"His Heart is turning back again to God's countrie."

He is no captious critic, no agitator, no dissatisfied and jaundiced growler. He envies no man his success, for he has a proud and wholesome con-

sciousness that his own life has not been lived in vain. He knows his country's story. He glories in her achievements; he sorrows over her errors; and he holds her great men in almost idolatrous veneration. For him the names of Washington, Hamilton, Lincoln, and anon of Lee and "Stonewall" Jackson, bring a flush of the cheek and a fine lift of the head. He never tires in hearing and reading about them. He *prefers* the society of the immortals.

What, then, shall he say of the sorrows which latterly have come upon the land? His optimism tells him that perhaps the worst is over, and that we are passing out from the shadows; but he sees continually about him, and in the midst of smiling peace, fresh evidences of man's inhumanity to man. So he looks always for new light; he shocks conservative ears, and mingles wisdom with hypotheses.

That Sunday afternoon he joined us on the broad piazza in the warm spring sunshine. We looked down across the prosperous valley, and at the rolling line of the Sandwich range lifted in middle distance. Dr. Primrose was feeling unusually well, vigorous, and cheerful, and soon the conversation was where he wanted it, in his own hands.

"William Ely, you maltreated me last night; and now you must listen to more Socialism talk. I'm looking for light as I told you; and so the first thing that surprises me, when I hear men denouncing Socialism, is their confident assertion that it would destroy individualism and personal effort. I suppose they have some sort of nebulous idea that in a Socialistic society all men who so choose could sit idly about in armchairs and smoke Havana cigars at the expense of the State. That is to say, the ordinary money rewards of labor being removed or minimized, there would be no incentive to labor. Or, to put it more grossly, they believe that money is the only incentive to labor. Let me say parenthetically that I don't propose to discuss the detailed constitution of a Socialistic State. No one is doing that yet, understandingly, I fancy. But I do question and protest against the assumption that money is the *one* reward of effort. The history of the race bears out no such assumption. Money is a recent invention in human evolution; it is merely our present conventional medium of exchange in the markets of the world.

"Even among our most commonplace moderns, however, money is not the only reward of effort.

It is not the one thing which we most seek in order to fend off individual degeneration. I like to think of those prizes which stimulate the young before they begin to take their part in the sordid dollar-scramble. The 'generous delusions of youth,' by the way, don't coincide with dollar-grabbing. The child in the nursery looks for prizes and rewards in return for effort. He finds them in the approbation of his parents and the smiles of his nurse. The school-boy is rewarded for good work by the joy of competition; by advancement in his classes; by the respect of his mates; and perhaps by medals, books, and the like; or in the athletic field, by distinction in games, by selection for important teams, by the generous applause of friends and rivals. As the boy becomes a man, he continues for a long time to look for similar distinctions. He does not shout at once for money. If he is in college, or learning a trade, or merely leading a social life, he strains for and finds many sorts of prizes, not least, perhaps, the wife whom he wins through struggle.

"You will say, perhaps, that these are all personal and selfish rewards. That saying is largely true of the rewards of the young, with their limited vision; but you will admit that the rewards of

broadening maturity take on a different bearing. Of course there are always the prizes of personal satisfaction; in medicine, for example, satisfaction in the confidence and goodwill of one's community, in the securing of distinguished and coveted appointments in schools and hospitals, and in the country-wide professional recognition, perhaps, which comes with years of increasing effort and solid accomplishment and contribution; but far more than these, though intimately concerned with such personal good things, are those impersonal, undefinable rewards, — in satisfaction with a life-work effectively, proudly, and generously done; perhaps for the benefit of the many, and for the well-being of the State.

"Of course, in every walk of life and in every vocation there are great rewards. If you are a blacksmith, is it not well to be the best blacksmith; or if a plumber, the best plumber? On the other hand, in the countless industrial occupations of the modern world, through a narrow specializing, much is being done to stifle individualism; as a result thousands of workers hate their jobs. To meet this sad fact, it should be the effort of employers and of labor organizations to see to it that

cramping, narrowing, stultifying work is varied in every possible fashion, for the sake of the physical and intellectual development of the individual.

"In discussing the rewards of life, however, and the non-monetary prizes towards which men and women may strive, we need not conceive of imaginary or merely possible situations. We have already in our midst two great bodies of men, who are incessantly and actively concerned for their own 'Services' and for their country; I mean the officers of the army and navy. To me there is something peculiarly fine in the unselfish devotion and the unrewarded service of the thousands of those men. When a young lieutenant with his little company follows a gang of Indian murderers for weeks through the desert, brings them to bay, destroys them, and relieves the frontier of an ancient terror, he is not looking for dollars. When a naval commander, in a converted yacht, attacks a squadron of three times his power, or sinks his vessel at the mouth of a hostile harbor beneath the guns of the enemy; or when a general officer pacifies a turbulent island, restores order, composes the abuses of generations, brings stability

and prosperity, and wipes out a ghastly endemic scourge, he does it all because it is his duty and in spite of the criticism, or grudging recognition, of his ungracious fellow citizens. Look at Goethals and Gorgas in Panama, — one accomplishing, successfully, superbly, and in briefest time, the greatest piece of engineering in history; the other making that work possible by turning a notorious pest-hole of the tropics into a salubrious winter resort, and keeping in the field with unimpaired health the thousands of laborers needed for the mighty work.

"Are Goethals and Gorgas looking for dollars? Surely not they; and yet, I tell you, they shall have their reward.

"It was Emerson who wrote the homely but delightful words: 'If a man can write a better book, preach a better sermon, or make a better mouse-trap than his neighbor, the world will make a beaten path to his door.'

"Of course you will say that all this is very true of selected and heroic groups, but what is to keep the average man up to his work? I take it that community interest, public sentiment, and, above all, *education*, must be relied upon. Of course I

have no Utopian dreams of a perfected human nature. There will always be weak, pathetic, and degenerate souls, I suppose. But when you conceive of the State as a great family, you will see that, in the course of a very few years, — three or four generations, — our individual types will be of a greatly higher average, and the unfortunates much fewer. It is not difficult to conceive of a people among whom there shall be no acute epidemic disease; no tuberculosis; no cancer, no alcohol; no foul, unmentionable contagions; and as a result few or no congenital deformities, nervous diseases, insanities, criminal tendencies, and other handicaps to individual and community progress. This is not a pipe-dream or a vision; it is the forecast of a situation which we are surely to bring about with or without Socialism. And when that time comes, when we have to deal with a thoroughly sane, alert, educated, physically sound community, then will we, indeed, be the greatest of nations, and be in a position to abolish the wars which still reveal our barbarism, and terrify and disgrace our civilization.

"Such an outcome of concerted altruistic endeavor should be no farther from us than we are

from the French Revolution. Perhaps, though, I have not yet answered your question, Ely: in a Socialistic State what is to keep the individual citizen in line? I have shown that the naughty fellows who need to be kept in line will be few in number, if all goes well with us; and I have hinted at a system of rewards and punishments. Something of that kind there must be. A State whose public business is so all-embracing as the one we are considering must take official notice of the good or bad lives of its citizens. There exists to-day an interesting institution, popularly known as the 'Carnegie Hero Fund.' It is administered by a committee. One conceives easily that such a committee might be multiplied so as to concern itself with many and diverse interests.

"You will remind me how it is a matter of common observation that public enterprises, public interests, and public utilities are to-day far more economically and efficiently administered by private corporations than by public officials. I admit it, but from that you cannot augur eventual failure of community-directed interests. We anticipate vast improvements, first, in public health, in public education, in public morals, and in public coöpera-

tion. Then we can look safely for increased public efficiency.

"All that, again, is parenthetical. We were speaking of rewards and punishments. In an important sense, of course, punishments must always exist. The undesirable citizen must be taught his undesirability, and be reformed or isolated. The fool, the knave, the traitor, the ingrate, the indolent, cannot receive the recognition and compensation of the honest citizen; but that is a matter of obvious detail.

"Let me say a few more words. There is one fundamental matter to which I have already alluded, — universal education. I do not mean the present popular and obligatory education, which stops with the grammar school or the high school; which teaches little more than the rudiments of English, and of popular science, and produces no trained minds whatever. I mean a higher training, which equips the student with intellectual or mechanical tools and an accurate knowledge of their use. Commonly, in the Socialism discussion, disputants lose sight of the fact that every single member of the ideal State would receive a high intellectual training, so far as he is capable of receiving it, — some-

thing approximating to the college or the technical school education of to-day. This conception throws an entirely new light on the social and civic problem, for we should then be dealing with a group of citizens such as the world has never known, and this group would comprise all the people.

"In view of this new conception of an educated people, countless new and unexpected questions — industrial and economical — arise. I will hint only at these, for the line of debate is obvious. An educated critic says, — What's going to become of the rough, unskilled, manual work of the State, if all your citizens are accomplished technicians? My friend, the thought should make you gasp for joy. Did you ever go on a camping, surveying, fishing, or shooting expedition with a group of men of your own kind? I have. One man may have charge of the wagon, another of the horses, another of the tents, another of the dish-washing, and so on. Whose is the rough, unskilled work there? and who cares? Work is worthy or unworthy, skilled or unskilled, onerous or joyous, according to community conventions, and the zeal, training, and ability of the worker. If a trained man be set to run a furrow, dig a trench, or sweep a crossing, he will

quickly develop methods of accomplishing his task, such as the age-long, grudging inefficiency of the untrained would never accomplish. The highly trained men of our ideal State, with their traditions of culture and mutual support, should develop an intelligence and a reasonableness such as would move mountains. Coöperative efficiency also would be developed to a high level, hours of work and of needless effort would be minimized; time would be allowed all men for recreation and cultivation, and new joys of life and new powers of human happiness would come into being, as I do believe."

He stopped, tired with much talking.

"Well, my dear Jonathan," said Ely at last, "you have certainly been reading and thinking to some purpose. You are as much of a dreamer as ever, and I admit that your dreams are sometimes beautiful. Of course, the one obvious reply, for hard-headed persons like Scriba and myself, who are constantly encountering the facts of life, is that men like you ignore the actual weakness, the inherent wickedness, and the brutality of humanity. You're talking of Utopia, of course, but the sad thing is that you seem truly to look for it. Scriba here was right, too, long ago, when he told Flaxman

that only by becoming a professional, by learning to depend on himself alone for a living and advancement, only so could he put off childish things, attain maturity, and 'arrive.' Your ideal Socialistic community seems to me especially designed to undermine and sap individualism, and to cut out that tough fibre which is needed for character-building; and you misrepresent present Socialistic tendencies. You've gone back to Bellamy's 'Looking Backward.'

"As for that strike which gives you a text for your sermon, — you should hear some of the people in the city talk about it. They may not be well informed, but they are far better informed than the frantic strike leaders, and the pathetic, ignorant mobs who follow them. The city people of whom I speak are kindly and generous, as their deeds do testify. Many of them are stockholders in those very mills. Many of them have sons in the troop of mounted militia, which has been sent down to assist in keeping order, and in protecting property. They tell me, from practically first-hand knowledge, that the state of things in that mill-town is truly shocking, a grave menace to individual property rights, and a most serious danger to civil govern-

ment. They say that the strike leaders are ferocious and unreasoning, while the maddened strikers — half-starved, and lashed by anarchistic talk — are like packs of wild creatures, ready for any brutality, mischief, or violence."

"Well, well," returned our host, with a smile, "we are far enough from Utopia as yet. I fancy we all need educating on new lines. I believe, too, that you are correct, — that human nature is still much what it was two thousand years ago, though Black Care may not sit behind those joyous young horsemen, whose anxious mothers have sent them off to put down the strike."

The Sunday afternoon was waning. Dusk was falling. Scattered fires sprang into light on distant hillsides across the valley. The farmer was again abroad; tidying his fields and roads, and burning the gathered "brush."

As Primrose watched the familiar and pensive scene, a twinkle of mirth shone in his kindly eyes and lighted his earnest face. "I love a fire," he said. "Who does not? What a marvelous thing it must have been to our far-away ancestors, when they discovered it. No wonder they worshiped it.

From those idolators down to Charles Lamb, every lover of his kind has loved a fire; and every man has loved best the fire of his own making. Often I have speculated idly as to how those prehistoric fires first were lighted. Did some freak of nature, some volcanic outburst, or the dregs thereof, suggest the uses of fire to the shivering cave men? Or did primitive man create fire by the friction of wood, or by the blow of flint on metal? Certainly it seems to be that the domestic fire, the purposeful fire, is the work of man. No most superior animal ever truly understood it, or adopted it of himself; while no tribe of men, even the most ignorant, savage, and debased, now lacks the fire.

"Of all fires the fire of the personal hearthstone is the most precious; and each one of us builds, cherishes, and tends his own fire with the care that he bestows upon a child. He is jealous for its reputation; he delights in its peculiar symmetry or eccentric activities; and his soul resents for it the unsympathetic mending and the rude and bumptious touch of the unfamiliar hand. There are fundamental principles common to the building of all fires, but each one of us gives his own fire a peculiar and personal flavor. As there are princi-

ples which underlie the building and starting of a fire, so, too, are there principles which underlie the keeping of it up. Did it ever occur to you that four creatures or elements enter into the construction of every fire? The tools of ignition, for which we employ the homely match; the tinder, for which discarded newspaper may best suffice; the 'kindlings,' with us finely split strips of driest wood; and finally the permanent coals, or 'cordwood,' whichever we may choose. For me the open fire of wood alone possesses charm, and coals bituminous concern me not. A wide and deep chimney and hearth, with perfect draft, are first essentials, too; andirons not high, and, banked upon the hearth, a clean and copious bed of ashes, of many weeks' burning, piled nearly to the level of the 'dogs.' Two different constructions I do affect, though similar in principle: a large round back-log behind the 'dogs'; in front of it, much crumpled tinder lightly strewn; down from the log, a sloping thatch of kindlings; and then above, two large split logs to catch the early blaze. Or else, two split logs laid upon the irons, a six-inch space between; below and then between, abundant paper laid; from log to log a copious roof of sticks, supporting well a third,

split, trusty log. So placed, a roar of flame lights up the hearth, and if the wood be dry, a glorious fire springs. You see that at the start we deal with elements all cold; for these, wide space and generous drafts play an important part.

"For me, however, tending and mending of the fire when burning full, or flagging, is of the greatest joy: the keeping narrowed spaces, gentle drafts; approaching glowing face to glowing face, without too rudely and by jealous chinks excluding air; dropping the fore-log now upon the hearth; raising an end or raking embers down; inserting curious charred and gleaming bits beneath their mighty fellows freshly piled; watching the smoke outpour; the streak of flame updart, then vanish, then endure with steady, buoyant, life-returning zeal; this is serene contentment. Build me no fires; let me tend mine own."

CHAPTER VIII

Reflections — Ambrose Paré

"'The atrocious crime of being a young man, which the honorable gentleman has, with such spirit and decency, charged upon me, I shall neither attempt to palliate nor deny; but content myself with wishing that I may be one of those whose follies may cease with their youth, and not of that number who are ignorant in spite of experience.' What public man to-day," added Dr. Primrose, "has the wit or the ability to write such English as that. No wonder old Robert Walpole slunk away from the fierce assaults of the terrible young Cornet of Horse."

It was the Monday of our week-end visit, but Ely and I still tarried. Our host's returning cheerfulness and vigor, his inspiring vitality, and his almost pathetic hunger for the audience of a lifetime, induced us to stay with him in his sunny bedroom. He was speaking of current literature, especially of the newer writers of fiction.

"In spite of that famous saying of Pitt's, which

old Samuel Johnson is said to have prepared for him, the fact remains that the season of youth is not always one of wisdom, even among novel writers. There's a young Englishman, Arnold Bennett, whose writings are said to be having an enormous sale. He is clever and industrious, but utterly without humor or a sense of perspective. I read through two of his books last winter, though I don't know why. He is that difficult thing to define, a realist, whatever he himself means by the word. He is said to boast of the amount of work he is able to turn off. He seems to produce 'literature' by the foot. Lately he spent two or three weeks in America to study us. He was extremely well advertised, and even to the end he submitted kindly to interviews.

"Of course his remarks about America are of no value, and are not even interesting; but his notions about literature have a certain value, because they are the notions of many modern readers, who are partly educated without being trained. This young man's conceit is colossal, though that is merely by the way. He appears to think well of some of our own short story writers; but it is when he gets to rattling about among the immortals that he takes

away your breath. He is said to acknowledge the genius of Henry Fielding; he is willing even to speak a kind word for good old Richardson; but for the past hundred and fifty years, he finds no writer of any particular distinction until he comes to Hardy. Scott, Charlotte Brontë, Dickens, Thackeray, George Eliot he groups as second-rate artists, as mere *sentimentalists*.

"That is the word we are waiting for, my friends. That expresses the idea which shocks and confounds the muddy-minded realist. *Sentiment* to him is as naught. It finds no place apparently in his vocabulary or in his life. What a distorted half vision of history and of our little world must be his, for it is Sentiment that distinguishes us from men of the Stone Age, and from the lower animals. What has not Sentiment accomplished in the world of men? It was Sentiment, true or false, that prompted the Psalms of David; that inspired Buddha and the Hebrew seers to the construction of great religions; that provoked the awful crime of Calvary; that led the footsteps of St. Paul; that established and extended the Christian Church; that inspired the Crusades, that confirmed the Reformation; that led thousands to martyrdom;

that made real civil liberty and political freedom in England, America, and France; that put an end to slavery; that liberated Cuba, and is now emancipating industrial mankind; these are a few of the results of Sentiment. The thoughts come to one offhand. Something of the story is hinted by Bennett's second-rate artists, the Sentimentalists. I fancy their works will live, and that future generations will thrill at the tale they have to tell. Is the world no better or happier for 'Ivanhoe,' for 'Jane Eyre,' for 'David Copperfield,' for Colonel Newcome and for Maggie Tulliver, or must we seek inspiration and literary satisfaction in 'Clayhanger' and in 'Tess'?

"To return to our own work, — did it ever occur to you that running through all technical talk, especially doctor talk, there is a sense of aloofness, as though our training and our interests kept us in a world apart from all the others. The very word 'doctor,' in English speech, means a doctor of medicine; and *physician* is implied, unless one specially indicates a doctor of laws, of divinity, of science, or of letters. We physicians are expected to perform curious wizard-like feats, and if we don't, we shatter even the most intelligent confi-

dence. Not long ago a well-known Boston surgeon told me of a painful experience. It seems that for some fifteen years he had done most of the surgery in the town of Barchester — ten miles from the city. The leading family physician of Barchester had sent for him to see scores of surgical cases, and for years his work in the town was almost brilliantly successful. He looked upon that physician and those townspeople as his friends, while at the same time he drew from the place a considerable share of his professional income.

"Then in one year there came a series of unavoidable calamities: he operated for internal abscess on the wife of a well-known broker, taking every reasonable precaution. That very night an old, latent heart trouble recurred, and within thirty-six hours she died of malignant heart disease. Again he operated for a small growth on another well-known woman in Barchester. The anæsthetic, as always in his cases, was given by an expert. The patient developed pneumonia, and died in forty-eight hours. Six months later, he operated for relapsing appendicitis on a fourteen-year-old schoolgirl, the charming daughter of his consultant's next-door neighbor. The child never rallied; a serious kidney

involvement developed, and she died at the end of a week. During her anxious illness her physician told my friend that he must pull the child through; that she must not die; for if she did, not only would his own practice be seriously damaged, but it would be impossible for him ever again to call my friend in consultation. That forecast has been verified — at least so far as my friend the surgeon is concerned. From that day, now two years ago, he has made no professional visits in Barchester.

"To those of us who are familiar with the problems of disease, and with the chances of life and death, it is obvious, of course, that this surgeon was essentially blameless. Those patients would have died no matter who operated, and they would probably have died shortly had no operation been done. Moreover, this same man had to his credit scores of successful operations without a death; but these facts weighed not at all with the terrified family physician and his demoralized flock."

"You can't blame them, though," said Ely; "naturally they look only to results. The ability, native sense, and sagacity of a surgeon, his years of preparation, his anxious days and nights, his heart-breaking experiences, — if he be an honest, humble

man, — and his earnest, unceasing struggles to save the particular case, — all go for nothing. In these respects, I admit that the physician has an immense advantage over the surgeon. If the physician loses a patient, the fact is commonly recognized as an act of God, and in spite of endeavor. If a surgeon's patient dies, the unthinking say that the surgeon operated and killed him. Pleasant for the surgeon, is n't it? and yet it's a reproach he must continually meet."

"The only way out," replied Primrose, taking up the thought, "lies in the better education of our public. Harvard is doing something through those weekly 'Popular Lectures,' but a great deal is still to do. For one thing the story of medicine and of medical men remains to be written. Technical historical volumes for the profession have been compiled by the dozen, but there's no story of medicine for the average reader. That is true of few other professions. Law, theology, politics, natural science, engineering, astronomy, and dozens of other serious interests have been brought to popular libraries; but the story of medicine and physicians is unknown, even to physicians themselves.

"Last winter, while dreaming on these things,

as I lay for months in bed, I thought I would make a little beginning of such popular preaching, by writing down briefly and simply the story of Ambrose Paré. You know that Paré was the first conspicuous clinical surgeon among us moderns. He himself tells of his struggles and trials in a very human and enlightening fashion. It seemed to me that the story of his life might well introduce the average man to the doctor's manner of thought.

"Here is my little manuscript. Shall I read it out? Yes? Let us call it

Ambrose Paré, and the Dawn of Modern Surgery

By Jonathan Primrose, M.D.

"'Now let there be the merry sound of music and the dance
Through thy corn-fields green, and sunny vines, O pleasant land of France.'

"No man loves his country more than does the Frenchman, and never did Frenchman love France more than did Ambrose Paré. He was a lover of his kind as well. He was the great and simple democrat of sixteenth-century Europe. When Paré first saw the light, the modern world also had

just been born, and he lived through the glorious, heroic, and terrible years of its struggling childhood. The record of his days covers almost the whole of the sixteenth century — from 1510 to 1590. It was a memorable century for France, whose great writers still tell the story with wonder. The Valois kings were nearing the end of their erratic course. In 1510 Louis XII was still upon the throne, — unquestionably to us moderns the best king of his line, — and France was still enjoying something of the calm and consequent prosperity which the two preceding reigns had brought. Those were times of curious groping change in politics and in life. The flowers of new knowledge, sown by the great Italian humanists, were beginning to bloom in sheltered gardens. Old knowledge was being brought back; and neglected science again was lifting her head. Men of vision were looking abroad. Printing and Luther; the magnetic compass and Columbus; the revival of the English language and Latimer; the vast student migrations, Padua, and Vesalius the anatomist, are not words of mere coincidence.

"Again, after years of coma, mankind was beginning to think. The feudal system was dying;

old things were passing away; intellect was beginning to supplant force; the common people were looking about; and the train was being laid which was to lead through years of blood and groans to the French Revolution and the claims of modern thought, not yet perfected.

"Conventional historians use kings and queens as milestones with which to measure the course of history, — kings and queens turned pawns in our unkind, modern days. For us still kings and queens serve well enough to mark eras and to line off the centuries, though their story tells us little enough of the true makers of history — the people of the land. In the France of Ambrose Paré the people of the land were abundantly worth knowing. Their sixteenth-century kings we remember because Dumas talks about them — pathetic, degenerate, mischievous young fellows mostly, — and Francis I leads them, with his foolish beard, his wild-Indian boastings, his harem, his Field of the Cloth of Gold, his squabbles with English Henry VIII and with Charles V of Spain, — Francis, a man now notable to us chiefly because he began to make trouble for his parliaments and to restrict them in those political rights which his two im-

mediate predecessors had conferred. In Francis's time Paré found an education and service as a field surgeon. After Francis came his son, Henry II, who brought that very naughty Catherine de' Medici to France as his queen and made the famous Diane de Poitiers his mistress. That Catherine, most wicked of modern women, was the mother of the feeble dandy kings who made a football of France and brought to an end the Valois line — thanks to their feeble queens, to the Huguenots, to St. Bartholomew, and to Henry of Navarre.

"Paré was surgeon to Henry II, the gay lover of Diane; he saw him pierced by the lance of Montgomery in a friendly joust; and he foretold his death when he perceived that the lance-head had deeply penetrated the brain through the orbit. The king died in his early forties, and was succeeded by his pathetic son, Francis II, whom we remember as the first husband of our Scotch Mary Stuart, and the victim of a middle-ear disease, which produced a meningitis and carried him off in the second year of his reign, — Paré again attending and protesting against the follies of his medical colleagues.

"Then came Charles IX, — he of St. Bartholo-

mew, — a mock heroic sportsman, clinging to his old nurse, and to Paré, the friendly surgeon, albeit they were Huguenots. Paré was with the king to the last of his fatuous twenty-four years — the surgeon now advanced well beyond threescore. The old hero was aging strongly. Men and women loved and trusted him. He stands as a tower of vigor, honor, and charity in the midst of that foolish throng of wild courtiers and jealous physicians.

"Henry III, the last Valois king, followed his brother Charles. With Henry also Paré had many scenes. One fancies the great surgeon humoring and chiding the effeminate, debauched, cruel, superstitious wretch who now sat on the throne of St. Louis, — his one sane and able companion the court jester, Chicot, as Dumas would have us believe.

"Those were active days, — terrible days in which to live, — gasping, hectic, vicious, blood-spilling days; men looking about wildly for relief and direction; women turning to a nebulous heaven, whither they would fain be led, with choice for guides of libertine priests or hard-fisted, blood-stained Puritan divines.

"Paré was busy among them all. He seems to

have been present as surgeon with the royal garrison of Cahors when Henry of Navarre made his successful attack on that devoted town. It was Navarre's first taste of war. Chicot, the court jester, unwillingly was in his suite. The great novelist tells his story: —

"'At this moment, as if in response to the imagination of Chicot, the cannon of the fortifications thundered, and opened a lane through the infantry within ten paces of the king [of Navarre]. "*Ventre Saint Gris!*" he said, "did you see, Chicot? It is all for the best, I think," and his teeth chattered. "He is going to be ill," said Chicot. "Ah," murmured Henry, "ah, you are afraid, cursed carcass; you tremble; wait, wait a moment; I will make you shake for something"; and burying his spurs in the flanks of the white horse that carried him, he rushed onward before the troops.'

"Cahors fell. Paré and Chicot returned with the news to the imbecile king in Paris.

"The French people and the land which Paré loved suffered the extreme of misery through all these times. The broad valleys, the rich plains, and the vine-clad hills, such as we know them today, were harried and devastated.

"Foreign wars with Spain, Italy, and Germany followed close one on another. The new religion and the old were in continual conflict. In 1574, on the accession of Henry III, it is estimated that 'already by reason of the civil wars more than a million persons had been put to death, all under the pretext of religion and public utility, with which both parties shielded themselves.' Public executions took place daily in all parts of France. Private murders were still more frequent. The nobility were becoming debased or extinguished; the peasantry were starved or driven from the plow to the battle-field; the middle class sat quaking and making spasmodic efforts to assert itself through the States-General; towns were razed, châteaux were burned, and the worst scenes of ancient Rome were reënacted. The most gracious and romantic country of Europe was staggering in a slough of misery and contempt, while across the Channel England was living the splendid days of Elizabeth, and continental Europe was falling under the powerful sway of Charles V and of his dark and vicious son Philip.

"In the midst of these cruel years science and the arts of medicine and surgery were beginning

again to take on life. Suffice it now to mention a few conspicuous names of Paré's period: Andreas Vesalius, of Padua, his contemporary, restored anatomy, — Vesalius, one of those remarkable youths whom history betimes records, wise, prophetic, daring; Paracelsus, charlatan or seer, bombastic and brilliant, taught his disciples to look beyond tradition and the authority of a dead language; Malpighi showed that the organs of the body are not homogeneous, but are composed of cells, themselves distinct entities; Servetus perceived something of the circulation of the blood, and was burned by the Protestants; Eustachius contributed to human anatomy; Linacre founded the Royal College of Physicians in London; while Sylvius, in Paris, gathered up, compiled, and systematized the fragments of former knowledge.

"One observes such scattered facts, not because they matter much now to us, or greatly concerned Paré, but because they recall for us the best types of scientific men who were then beginning to think. For the mass of physicians and surgeons in the sixteenth century we can say little of good. They lived according to their dreary lights, and practiced monstrously. Ignorant of anatomy, of physiology,

and of the causes and nature of disease, they substituted a pathetic traditional empiricism for common sense, and did what harm they could. The Indian savage, with his incantations, and the Tartar nomad, with his primitive massage, were in better case than our sixteenth-century ancestors of semi-civilized Europe.

"In Paré's time medical practice had been in some sort systematized, with its rules and its professors. There were three orders of practitioners, physicians, surgeons, and barber-surgeons, of whom the writers tell, each with their peculiar traditions, rights, and methods; each with their shortcomings and characteristic absurdities. The physicians stood at the top. They must talk Latin, must have studied in recognized schools, and have passed rigid tests in the pedantry of the times. They inherited many of the traditions of the priests, their predecessors, and were looked to as the guardians of their art. They determined the disease of afflicted patients and prescribed the treatment. On no pretext must they soil themselves, or debase their calling, by the shedding of blood. Next to the physicians came the surgeons proper, of the confraternity of Saint Cosmo, surgeons of the long

robe, as they were called. They, too, were to an extent educated men, speaking Latin, passing examinations in Latin; acting as humble colleagues to the physicians, performing serious surgical operations in civil practice, but not permitted to prescribe medicine for general disease. Finally, there were the barber-surgeons, humble fellows enough, speaking the vernacular only, rudely trained as apprentices in the shop, the hospital, and on the battle-field, — themselves, too, following an old-time tradition and calling. In ancient days they were servants of the monasteries, — lay brothers, gardeners, footmen, butlers, and barbers; busy barbers, for they shaved the crowns of their masters. Their further duties were manifold; to shaving they added the simple household surgical arts of bleeding and poulticing. On such lines and in later times the barber-surgeon practiced his own independent business. It came about that the victim of a bleeding was taught to grasp in his hand a stout pole, to stimulate the flow of blood from the arm; the blood as it ran would often stain the pole. About the blood-stained pole the barber twisted a white ribbon and hung this emblem of his trade above the outer door. To-day he hangs it there.

"Paré began his active life a humble barber-surgeon. In his time, physicians, surgeons, and barber-surgeons were continually in strife, — surgeons poaching upon the preserves of physicians, barber-surgeons upon those of surgeons, and all three calling upon the courts and the king to support them in their struggles and pretensions. Those were bitter days; union labor was strongly organized, and the struggle for existence was never more fierce. Such were the men, the wrangles, and the times into which Ambrose Paré was born, in the year of Our Lord 1510, Louis XII reigning over France.

"France was then at war in Italy — a war memorable to us because it saw the death of Bayard. These matters did not immediately concern the family of the child Paré. His native place was a hamlet close to Laval in Maine. His father was a servant, probably valet and barber, to the Seigneur de Laval. There were other children of whom the writers tell; a sister Catherine, who married Gaspard Martin, a master barber-surgeon of Paris, and two brothers of no special moment. The boy grew up in humble village surroundings, but had the unusual privilege for that day of learning to

read and write, and perhaps some slight tincture of the Latin — though he seems to have lost that later. We find him next in Paris, a young man of twenty-three, attending lectures on anatomy at the University, having served an apprenticeship to a barber-surgeon, name unknown. The training was hard and crude enough, — long hours, constant work, little leisure, and blows for recompense. The lectures, too, must have been a sorry farce, for besides anatomy, the teacher expounded the writings of De Chauliac on wounds, tumors, and ulcers, with a few remarks on fractures and dislocations. 'The honor of the University forbade a professor to speak French, and the apprentices did not understand Latin' (Paget).

"By this time the old King Louis XII was eighteen years dead, and his cousin, Francis I, married to Louis's daughter Claudia, was on the throne. It was a reign of many wars, furnishing abundant practice for the budding surgeon.

"This early portion of Paré's life was constantly busy and constantly progressive. He was a keen, ambitious, highly intelligent man; kindly, affectionate, generous; undismayed by great names and pomposities; familiar early with human weak-

ness and sorrow; sympathetic alike with the sufferings of peasant and priest, fierce men and frail women, merchant, magistrate, and monarch. While still unlicensed to practice, he won an interneship at the famous Hôtel Dieu, a hospital already nine hundred years old; the refuge of penniless affliction, the abode of misery, filth, nameless abominations, and some good surgery. One might fill pages with the description of this marvelous asylum, where men and women, boys and girls, the dead and the living, thieves and their victims, lepers and infants with their young mothers, the wounded, the insane, and the plague-stricken were herded promiscuously together, often three or four in a bed; in great wards, where privacy was impossible and decency was unknown, where fierce and brutal operations, without anæsthesia, were done at the bedside, and the gigantic washing of foul linen was accomplished in the near-by Seine but twice in a twelvemonth. Such was Paré's home for nigh three years, and there he learned to know and serve his kind.

"The year in which Paré left the Hôtel Dieu was 1537, and he was twenty-seven years old, sufficiently skilled in his profession and ready to begin

the business of life. He had good health, common sense, and a broad outlook on the future. He was content with no paltry corner practice and the humdrum good will of simple neighbors. Immediately he established a snug surgery in Paris, and then he went off to follow his profession with the army. This double and hazardous course he took that he might extend his activities, increase his acquaintance, and never lack occupation, whether in time of peace or war.

"The second of the three chapters of Paré's life begins with this year 1537 — the chapter of war and adventure. Not until 1569, after more than thirty years, did he settle down finally to a civilian practice in Paris, and to the duties and employments incident to his dignity and advancing years.

"Paré's military life furnishes the material for one of the most picturesque and stimulating surgical memoirs in literature. It was written after many years, and in the author's old age. In it he tells us much of the story of his life. When Paré was seventy years old there ruminated in Paris one Etienne Gourmelen, dean of the faculty of medicine, — a devotee of the easy-chair, a dyspeptic, unpractical, controversial person. This dean

attacked the great surgeon in an inane book, which opposed ancient authority to certain of the new, brilliant, and effective surgical measures introduced by Paré. Paré answered, told much of the story of his life and achievements, in a series of short, trenchant essays, and incidentally crushed Gourmelen, whom he contemptuously addresses throughout as *Mon petit Maistre*. Paré was a master of clinical surgeons. Listen to his opening paragraphs. He begins without preamble: 'I will here show my readers the towns and places where I found a way to learn the art of surgery. . . . In the year 1536 the great King Francis sent a large army to Turin. . . . M. de Montejan was Colonel-General of the infantry, whose surgeon I was at this time.' Observe that officers took with them their own personal surgeons. There was then no regular, organized army medical corps.

"'A great part of the army being come to the pass of Suze, we found the enemy occupying it, and they had made forts and trenches, so that we had to fight to dislodge them and drive them out. And there were many killed and wounded on both sides. . . . Now I was at this time a fresh-water soldier; I had not yet seen wounds made by gun-

shot, at the first dressing. It is true I had read in John de Vigo that wounds made by fire-arms partake of venenosity; and for their cure he bids you cauterize them with oil of elders scalding hot, mixed with a little treacle. And to make no mistake, before I would use the said oil, knowing this was to bring great pain to the patient, I asked first, before I applied it, what the other surgeons did for the first dressing, which was to put the said oil, boiling well, into the wounds, wherefore I took courage to do as they did. At last my oil ran short, and I was forced, instead thereof, to apply the yolks of eggs, oil of roses, and turpentine. In the night I could not sleep in quiet, fearing some default in not cauterizing, that I should find the wounded to whom I had not used the said oil dead from the poison of their wounds, which made me rise very early to visit them; when beyond my expectation I found that those to whom I had applied my digestive medicament had but little pain, and their wounds without inflammation or swelling, having rested fairly well that night; the others, to whom the boiling oil was used, I found feverish, with great pain and swelling about the edges of their wounds. Then I resolved never more

thus cruelly to burn poor men with gunshot wounds.'

"That anecdote — the trying experience and the sane conclusion — are characteristic of Paré. He drew his own conclusions, and acted on conviction, and in that he differed from all practitioners of his time. He dared greatly, for he lived in an age of conservative authority. Those fine, humane, and rational qualities made him one of the foremost clinical surgeons in our annals. And regarding this particular story of the boiling oil, so modestly told, let us observe this: that the simplified wound treatment for gunshot injuries, then introduced, was one of Paré's great contributions to surgery — perhaps his greatest. After Paré, torturing of the wounded put men in ill repute. So let us note, as his first important contribution to surgery, the simplified treatment of gunshot wounds.

"Paré's memoirs are full of strange tales, one of which suggests the famous Harvard crowbar case — in which a quarryman recovered after a tamping-iron had passed completely through his head from beneath the chin upwards, emerging at the vertex. Paré tells us how Francis of Lorraine, Duke of Guise, was wounded before Boulogne with a

thrust of a lance, 'which entered above the right eye, towards the nose, and passed out on the other side between the ear and the back of the neck, with so great violence that the head of the lance, with a piece of wood, was broken and remained fast; so that it could not be drawn out save with extreme force with smith's pincers. Yet, notwithstanding the violence of the blow, which was not without fracture of bones, nerves, veins, and arteries, and other parts torn and broken, my lord, by the grace of God, was healed.'

"Casual students of surgical literature think of Paré as the man who invented the ligature of arteries, and doubtless we recall the celebrated painting, many times reproduced, of the great surgeon on the battle-field, surrounded by prancing horses, stately pavilions, and pompous-looking officers, as he amputates the leg of an anxious soldier, who sits stroking his long beard and gazing at the stump, while Paré waves aside the hissing cautery and applies a linen ligature to the bleeding artery. It is a striking scene. Here is Paré's modest account of the great achievement: 'On his return from the expedition King Henry [II] besieged Danvilliers, and those within would not surrender. They got

the worst of it, but our powder failed us; so they had a good shot at our men. There was a culverin-shot passed through the tent of M. de Rohan, which hit a gentleman's leg, who was of his household. I had to finish the cutting-off of it, which I did without applying the hot irons.' He tied the bleeding vessels with linen threads, and so, without needless pain, he saved the life of the man, who exclaimed that he had got clear of his leg on very good terms.

"In truth, however, Paré never dreamed of claiming that he had invented the ligature. The ligature was used by Roman Galen and many others in ancient times to control hemorrhage from wounds; but strangely enough, the thought of controlling hemorrhage from amputation wounds seems to have occurred to none until Paré in the middle of the sixteenth century.

"That was a notable feat. It marked an era in surgical history. Taken with the simplified method of wound treatment, it inaugurated a new conception of surgery, — of an art hitherto barbarous and cruel, now become beneficent and humane. In a hundred other ways Paré showed his kindness of heart and an understanding of how human suffer-

ing might be lessened, until his sensibilities bore the stamp of genius. He learned to go about his work deftly, silently, effectively. He quieted terror; he soothed pain; he encouraged sleep; he appreciated the value and limitations of food and stimulants, of clean air and fresh linen. His splints and dressings were a revelation in comfort and support. His bandaging was a marvel of smoothness, beauty, and efficiency. Henry II felt that he could die under his care in dignity and ease. Francis II, in his last hours, held the kind hand of his benefactor. Antoine, King of Navarre, resigned himself to death when Paré whispered that his torn shoulder-joint would prove fatal; and Charles IX clung to him through his final, shrieking, ghost-haunted days. Ambrose Paré was a great soul, truly without fear and without reproach.

"Let us look again at some of the facts and details of his career. We saw him off for the wars in Italy, when Francis I was fighting, when the century was still young, and himself in his twenty-eighth year. So well did he conduct himself that he rose shortly above the crowd, for he qualified as a master barber-surgeon at thirty-one. Later, after sixteen years of military life, he had so won the

confidence of kings and their officers, and had so endeared himself to the common soldiers, that his presence alone was looked on as better than a reinforcement. When Metz was besieged by the Spaniards in 1552, Paré, sent by King Henry, penetrated to the city. Guise commanded the defense. He embraced the great surgeon, presented him to his delighted officers, and revived the spirits of his broken troops, who cheered him wildly, shouting that now they should not die, since Ambrose Paré was come. The city was saved.

"We remember the surgeons of the long-robe, that proud little brotherhood of Saint Cosmo, who patronized and scorned the barber-surgeons. They saw the rise of Paré, appreciated his distinction, and resolved to make him their own. So, without formality, with scarcely the pretense of an examination, their precious Latin forgotten, they admitted him to their ranks and made him their most honored member.

"In the intervals of these skirmishings, rewards, and military honors, Paré was employing himself as a civil surgeon of distinction. His casting-forth of the boiling oil had early attracted the interest of the great Sylvius, now an old man, and his former

master; and the friendship of Sylvius helped his struggling youth. He returned often to Paris; his military fame introduced him to powerful patrons, and kings honored him, as we have seen. He married — Jehanne Mazelin — whose father was a servant of the great Du Prat, Chancellor of France. Paré took her with one hundred and twenty dollars for dot; she was twenty and he was thirty-one. They had a daughter, but no son lived to maturity. Years later, when past middle-age and after the death of Jehanne, Paré married again; this time with many marriage settlements and much stately display. But though he became the father of nine children in all, he had the fate of most great men; no children lived to carry down his name.

"Of Paré we recall another fact, too, — a fact inevitable in the life of a distinguished surgeon, — he was a great writer and teacher. He was a keen and unsparing controversialist; he was a born leader of men. Much of his writing was final for centuries. He had been publishing essays and treatises through all his professional life — mostly on matters dealing with military surgery; but in 1575, when sixty-five years old, he issued an edition of his collected works, dedicated to that absurd king, Henry III:

'God is my witness,' he writes, 'and men are not ignorant of it, that I have labored more than forty years to throw light on the art of Surgery and bring it to perfection. And in this labor I have striven so hard to attain my end that the ancients have naught wherein to excel us, save in the discovery of first principles; and posterity will not be able to surpass us (be it said without malice or offense) save by some additions, such as are easily made to things already discovered.'

"It would be profitless here to discuss in detail those surgical accomplishments which brought him pride. Of his methods and his attitude towards suffering I have already spoken. He was an encyclopædic writer. As Paget remarks: 'Save Art and Politics, the works of Paré contain every possible subject: Anatomy and Physiology, Medicine, Surgery, Obstetrics, State Medicine, Pathology, Pharmacy, Natural History, Demonology, and much else.' He dealt, as an authority, with all these matters: he had the short-comings of his time, to be sure, — something of credulity, no little of superstition, dread of unseen and malign influences; but when all is said, he recognized in the main the healing forces of nature and the preponderance of

good, even in that blood-stained age; the value of solid accomplishment, the saving grace of work, and all with the simplicity and enthusiasm of a truly great soul. His enormous experience lends force to his descriptions, conclusions, and advice; we rise from the reading convinced that here indeed was a man.

"Such writings, activities, and labors kept Paré continually in the public eye. While he won and held the regard of kings and peasants, he was not always in favor with conventional physicians. While he labored for the dignity and advancement of his own order, he met the jealousy, dislike, and opposition of university authorities. In the end he prevailed largely. That is a long story, — significant to Dryasdust, valueless to us.

"Tradition has reckoned Ambrose Paré a Huguenot, but that is a matter on which he himself mainly is silent. The friend of Coligny, the correspondent of Calvin, the surgeon and friend of Guise, the confidant of Charles IX and Henry III, — it is impossible to class Paré among the partisans of a creed. He went to mass; he read the Bible; he respected the Church of Rome; he lived in charity with Protestant divines: not that he was all things

to all men, but he looked for the best in all, and endured sadly the shouting of sectaries, the pretension of dogma, and the exalting of fugacious gabble. Whatever he believed, — peace to his ashes, — I doubt if he had a creed. But he lived through the St. Bartholomew — a bitter day, never to be forgotten, August 24, 1572. Two days before the massacre the Huguenot hero, Coligny, Admiral of France, was shot at, while leaving the king's palace. His hand only was injured, and he sent for his friend Paré to repair the damage. Paré amputated two fingers, but he had come in haste, improperly equipped. The work was roughly done, but Coligny never flinched. Rumors were in the air; anxiety was abroad; the king in his palace was reserved and morose; the villainous queen mother, Catherine de' Medici, was conspiring; young Henry of Navarre — half prisoner, half guest — was being married to the king's sister, Marguerite de Valois; unwonted crowds, with strange tokens and passwords, roamed the streets. Paré went unharmed among them all. We hear of him in the king's chamber; we watch him accosted by Guise; we see him at the sick-bed of Coligny. Early in the morning of the twenty-fourth, Sunday, one of

Coligny's gentlemen, Cornaton, hurries in. 'Monseigneur,' he cries, 'it is God who calls us to Him.' Coligny replies, 'I have been ready to die this long time, but you, my friends, save yourselves if you still can.' They escaped over the roof, Ambrose Paré carried with them; and later, by the king's order, he was secreted in the royal chamber from the assassins. We read of the old Admiral stabbed in his bed, cast out into the courtyard, and there dispatched by order of Guise, director of the day's work.

"The last chapter of Paré's life runs with the reign of the last Valois king, Henry III, — from 1574 to 1589. Paré himself died in 1590, in his eighty-first year. While those last sixteen troubled years were given largely to his country, Paré never for a day forgot the advancement of his own profession. He worked. The sum total of his labors is astounding. He wrote; he spoke; he traveled. He was seventy-five years old when he published the famous 'Journeys,' in reply to Gourmelen. A few years before this we find him putting out two great surgical volumes of five hundred pages each. One groans over his daily routine. He rose at four in the morning, and went at once to his surgery,

where he read and wrote until six; then he breakfasted on milk and dry bread. At six-thirty he began the reception of patients, who thronged to him until eleven o'clock, when he dined. After dinner he slept for a half-hour, when he started forth on his rounds, on foot or horseback, — surgeons had no carriages in those days. Often he visited the Hôtel Dieu, where he operated and taught, and where he wrote over the door: 'I dress the wound; God heals it.' He supped wherever chance found him, — in some humble shop, at the hospital, the Louvre, or rarely with his wife at home; then to his studies again, or to see more patients, and at last to bed, at midnight or long after.

"He was always well. Born in the country, and of a vigorous stock, he grew up a vigorous lad, and rarely himself knew what sickness was. Simple and abstemious, his forces never failed, and he met his work as it came. Once he broke his leg; once he was bitten by a poisonous reptile; once he had a hemorrhage; and again a sharp sciatica from exposure and overwork; but he rallied with vigor unimpaired. Once he fainted, standing over a plague-stricken patient; he had the plague himself later, but it

mattered not. He was abstemious, though he loved good wine, and it is surmised (Paget) that he never smoked, for he was fifty when Jean Nicot brought the first tobacco to Paris. Once he believed that his enemies tried to poison him. It was at Rouen in 1562, and he writes: 'I found myself at dinner with a company, wherein were some who hated me to death for the Religion. They handed me some cabbages, which contained either corrosive sublimate or arsenic. With the first mouthful I felt nothing; with the second, I had a great heat and burning, and great astringency in the mouth, and especially at the back of it, and the foul taste of the good drug.' . . . Loyal man; at any rate, he took the proper remedy and it worked.

"The writers, and especially his voluminous biographer, Malgaigne, tell many stories characteristic of Paré. In spite of his goodness of heart, he hated beggars, for the beggars of old Paris were a mighty army of rogues, thieves, and impostors, such as Victor Hugo scores: 'There was the woman whom Jehanne Paré found begging at the door of the Huguenot Chapel at Vitry, on a Sunday, with a counterfeit ulcer, and so she was whipped and banished.' There was another beggar, with banner

and tub and castinets; his face was covered with leprosy made of glue, and was kept of a livid tint by a scarf pulled round his neck, half throttling him. He, too, was unmasked, and was whipped thrice through the town, and the third whipping killed him, while the gossips told how it was no great loss to the country.

"In those last years of his life, when the royal house was tottering, when the Guises and a few great nobles endeavored to control the king, when the country was rent by religious wars, and Huguenot Henry of Navarre, opposing the Catholic League, was advancing across the land, Paré continued in Paris, busy with his peaceful art. That was a distraught and unhappy Paris, set in the midst of an unhappy France. Two hundred years later we read of the Reign of Terror, and the downfall of an aristocracy, the great ones of the earth. Unhappy France; she has seen many reigns of terror, but the cruelty of Robespierre and of Danton was as nothing compared to the cruelty of Catholic and Huguenot, Henry of Valois, Henry of Navarre, and Henry of Guise.

"In his own last years Paré's Paris was a place of some two hundred thousand souls, constantly

increased by the wretched country people whom war, devastation, and famine drove to the city. They came in, — haggard, emaciated, starving, diseased, — to swell the increasing swarms of beggars and the destitute. The sufferings of Paris were indescribable, and Paré was a familiar figure to all these people. He is one of the historic figures of the Paris of those awful times, — as it is written of him, 'Known to everybody, keeper of the lives and secrets of innumerable important people, head of his profession, chief surgeon to the king.' The plague came in 1580, and remained for years, as if that alone were wanting. The price of food was prohibitive except for the rich. Taxes rose meantime, and the luxury of the court and its followers increased. One might quote scores of instances. Observe one from L'Estoile's Journal: 'August 23, 1587, Jean Louis de Mougaret, duc d'Espernon, chief favorite of the king, whom he used to call his eldest son, was married quietly at the château of Vincennes. The story was told everywhere that the king gave him on his marriage the sum of four hundred thousand crowns.'

"And again: 'Truly the face of Paris was miserable at this time; and he who has ever heard or

read in Josephus the factions of John, Simon, and other villains, who under the veil of hypocritical religious zeal plundered and sacked the city of Jerusalem, — if he had now come to Paris, he would have seen a like thing.'

"The diary of the years goes on with increasing gloom and despair. The king becomes more craven, superstitious, and imbecile; the power of the Catholic Guises and their League increases; rioting and anarchy spread. Paré remains at his post, but his fees have dwindled away.

"Great national and international events are recorded: News of the execution of Mary Queen of Scots in 1587; Navarre's victory of Coudras in the same year; the outbreak of fighting between the Guises and the king in 1588, and their pretended reconciliation; news of the Spanish Armada destroyed; and finally, at the end of the year, the murder of Guise and of his brother the cardinal. With the incoming of another year, 1589, old Queen Catherine, the King's mother, died, and then, six months later, the King himself was assassinated.

"All this availed nothing to our old hero Paré and his forlorn people. The political heirs of the Guises

kept up the civil war, and Henry of Navarre, now Henry IV, laid siege to distracted Paris, after winning the battle of Ivry in March, 1590.

" 'Through thy cornfields green, and sunny vines, O pleasant land of France.'

"We come to the last scenes of Ambrose Paré. Henry IV, the Huguenot champion, invested Catholic Paris. The people began to die in the streets, — one hundred to two hundred daily. The food came to an end, and they ate the dead. The Archbishop of Lyons led the defense, while the priests put on armor and raged through the city. Here again we find Paré. Eighty years old, heart-sick, exhausted, and indignant, he meets the great prelate in the streets. Before hundreds, he shows him the hopeless situation and the misery of his flock, — dead and dying about them, — and implores him to put an end to the useless struggle. A few days later the siege was raised.

"This last awful year saw the end of Paré. He died in December, but of his last days we know no more. It is a notable and important life. Perhaps it was a great life. One speculates on what this man might have done had he lived in better days and saner times. But such speculation is profitless.

The times helped make the man. We see him a mighty soul when men's hearts were failing them; a brave reformer, a good citizen, and a great surgeon, when chaos reigned. Some men are great for having lived unspotted in this naughty world. It was so with Paré. The people of France loved him for what he was. The spirit of his young manhood never left him; and he died as he had lived — a high-hearted and gallant gentleman.

"'So nigh is grandeur to our dust,
So near is God to man, —
When Duty whispers low — "Thou must,"
The Youth replies — "I can."'"

CHAPTER IX

Hospital Talk

As we journeyed southward a day or two later, I found Ely unusually silent. The beautiful drive through the hills passed him by almost unnoticed; and it was not until we had been a half-hour in the train that he came to himself. In the morning's paper I read undigested fragments of thought, and other slip-slop. The newspaper world seemed trivial enough after the little world of earnest fact we had left.

Ely took up the tale: "There is no doubt that Primrose has an interesting life; perhaps his method is better than ours. In his writing and talking about illness, too, I could not but contrast his thoughts, and his point of view with those of average patients. He suggested that contrast himself when he wrote about their frequent puzzlement and terror. How true it is that with most of us the final scenes are undignified and commonplace even among the highest and most aloof persons. We doctors seem to get under the skins of all mankind.

I remember Arthur Benson puts it somewhat differently. In describing the last hours of Charles Kingsley, who died of pneumonia, Benson writes something of this sort, — 'He lay unconscious, in the sad and solemn occupation known as dying — when the most commonplace person in the world, who lies dozing and fevered in the darkened room, is invested for all who move silently about the house with a strange majesty and awe.' Yet that description does not necessarily conflict with my statement. For the doctor, and more especially for the nurse, — for those of us who are occupied with the humble personal offices about the sick man, — it is all commonplace enough; while for the anxious friends and children, for those who loiter sadly near the accustomed room, in unaccustomed idleness, waiting through the hours, there is that strangeness and that awe of which Benson tells. Sometimes it seems as though the waiting were without beginning and would never end. Then unexpectedly, gently, a whispered voice tells us it is over; and we look about surprised, almost offended, as it were, by something past belief.

"Those are the days in which one lives at close grips with the unknown, — and yet that un-

known should some day be knowable, one almost thinks.

"Primrose's little description of the ancient Hôtel Dieu was interesting. The fact is, in that nasty, unwashed old France, the great hospital grew worse and worse until after the French Revolution. I remember reading how surprised were the French medical officers, who came to America during our own Revolution, when they saw the decency of our well-swept wards in the new Philadelphia and New York hospitals. Of course all hospitals, the world over, shine to-day with resplendent polish, but I fancy the sensations of modern patients, when they enter one of our hospitals, are not very different from the sensations of their great-grandmothers. I mean our large municipal hospitals for the poor.

"Did you ever try to put yourself in the place of a sensitive sick man going to a large general hospital? I have, and I've come to see that the experience may be very hard. It was far worse before we had the help of Social Service workers. Of course all these trials against which sensitive persons protest are perhaps inevitable; but certainly a sick man on going to a hospital has a right

to demand better treatment than he gets from the ticket-agents and gate-men in a railway station. Of course, too, all officials who deal personally with the great public must have a hard time of it. Every policeman knows that. That great public is rude, boisterous, and uncivil mostly, — on the street, on its travels, and at baseball games. In such places it needs firm, and even rough handling. But when the great public is ill and goes to a hospital, it must be kindly treated. Then it is frightened; it is in pain; it has fever; it is mystified; it is not bossing its own job; it is confiding itself to the care of strangers, whom it is told to trust, and it feels that it is entering blindly upon a great, strange, and terrible experience. We doctors, in talking to a poor patient in our offices, and when advising his going to a general hospital, are often unreasonably impatient and irritable because the patient shrinks from the prospect. I'm afraid we're sometimes bumptious and patronizing. Our point of view seems often to be that we alone are bestowing the benefit, — a mediæval and absurd notion. It is said that Mr. Rockefeller gave a great sum to help medical teaching at one of our universities because he was convinced that that university,

through its hospital affiliations, controlled the 'richest clinical material' to be found. The staff positions of our great hospitals — even those that pay nothing whatever in dollars — are sought and held through active life by our most ambitious men. Every patient in a hospital, every sick man, furnishes material for laboratory study. Without the sick in our general hospitals, medical progress would be almost impossible, or would stop; and without the complacent patient for his demonstrations the bedside teacher would soon resign his chair. These are facts which our own profession, as well as the general public, should have more constantly in mind. I wish you would write them down and put them in a book some time.

"Another thing, — as long as I am lecturing you, and Primrose has turned us towards medical history, we must remember that the purpose of a hospital is quite different — is immensely broader, than it was a hundred years ago. Take the old Pennsylvania Hospital in Philadelphia, for example; as Benjamin Franklin's inscription runs, it 'was piously founded for the relief of the sick and miserable.' That purpose is still true of modern hospitals, we trust; but there are now two other pur-

poses of a hospital, — the *study* of disease and the *teaching* of medicine. Many well-to-do and well-informed people forget those last two purposes; and sometimes in talking to poor patients we forget them, too; but the poor patients don't forget them. They exaggerate the evil, as they think it. They don't know, or they ignore the fact, that competent and experienced chiefs are responsible for every hospital ward, and that the chiefs have junior assistants. Many of the patients see the assistants only and eventually leave the hospital proclaiming that they have been in the hands of students. In frequent instances, when examining old hospital patients, of fair intelligence even, I find that they know nothing of any surgeon-in-chief, and can't name the man who operated on them. These are old tales, of course; and of no special consequence except as showing how little trust you can put in the story of the average hospital patient.

"Not only is the purpose of the hospital greatly broader than it was, but the obligations of the staff are vastly more burdensome. In the old days, the surgeon or physician 'went on duty' at the hospital for three or four months of the year. His object was to do his share towards caring for the city's

sick poor. His action was regarded as simple charity. He thought of it as nothing else. Incidentally, perhaps, he might give a few clinical lectures to medical students.

"In the course of time all that has been changed; gradually the hospital, with its associated medical school, has become the centre of medical life in the community. Members of the staff are now on duty for six, nine, and even twelve months of the year. The labors of these public servants have come to be excessive, out of all proportion to the recognition, or any other reward, which the men get. In many cases, happily, the problem of proper values is working itself out. In most progressive communities, nowadays, special hospital wings or 'private wards' are reserved, in which the staff lodge and tend their private patients, charging regular fees. So they relieve immensely the strain of their work; and save time and strength by concentrating their 'public' and their private patients under one roof. In a very few old-fashioned hospitals the inhuman practice still prevails of taking the best of a physician's strength for public charity work, and then driving him forth to make his bread and see his private patients at their homes or in a number of

necessarily inferior private hospitals. I'm told that in Boston the eccentric people, not content with two splendid public or semi-public hospitals, — pricelessly equipped, and capable of indefinite expansion for the benefit of private patients, — I'm told that the people there are planning to build an extravagant, independent, and distinct private hospital, duplicating the present equipments, and calling upon the already over-rushed profession to man these extra works."

"It's all true, in a measure," I said, "though you do somewhat exaggerate the situation. The fact is that many surgeons especially welcome this makeshift scheme, as a relief from conditions which were becoming intolerable."

Our train, by this time, was far down the state, racing through the Merrimac Valley, and by the side of those beautiful stretches of river which the rails follow as far as the Massachusetts city of Lowell. We had gone to the dining-car, and were dawdling over the conventional railway luncheon.

"After all," I continued, "the good which our hospitals are doing seems to be greater every year; and the dread of hospitals is certainly less than when you and I first knew them. In spite of the modern,

impersonal, organized charities, and the more or less communistic sentiment which is coming to prevail, I find that an interest and a care for individual patients is more frequent than it was twenty or thirty years ago. Then we were saturated with the bad German tradition, which a former generation of students had brought home with them. Hospital patients, especially 'out-patients,' were driven like sheep, and their personal feelings were ignored. I remember some of my old teachers, men still living, whose public insulting questions and callous maulings of decent men and innocent young women made me groan and shudder in spirit. The good done by such doctors — outside of mere inevitable mechanical treatment — must have been less than nothing. Now, we are on better ground, as it seems. We are developing an American hospital method, so to say; thanks in part to publicity, but especially to Cabot and his Social Service preachments. Concentrate on the individual; don't bind up your patients in inflexible groups; learn their stories; follow them to their homes; succor and assist them; stimulate and inspire them. That is the present teaching, and for such teaching we should have been hooted into

bedlam a few years ago. It's a method as old as Christianity; but it was unorganized and almost obsolete, until Cabot again saw its possibilities; revived it, organized it, dressed it up, told the world about it, and replanted it for our present delectation.

"On the other hand, of course there is the serious and growing danger of 'hospital abuse.' Thousands of unscrupulous persons have learned that they can be treated for little or nothing at public hospitals, and by highly trained men. Being without self-respect, they abuse that privilege. Such abuse is another problem, which our much-talked-of hospital-for-the-middle-class would help to solve. The other day, one of our friends in a New England hospital, with much spirit informed me that in the 'West' they do better; that out there hospital abuse is almost unknown; that practically every patient who enters a Western hospital must pay something, according to his means. I don't understand it. I'm sure I trust it may be so; but how it is accomplished, and why there should be such a change in human nature between New York and Chicago passes comprehension."

"From many aspects large modern hospitals are

extremely interesting, and growing more interesting," said Ely reflectively. "I'm inclined to think that for the working staff, physicians and nurses, the hospital life is more absorbing than is university life for *its* professionals, — if we except the Fellows of Cambridge and Oxford. In the past generation there has been the development of a unique hospital community. What would the old quidnuncs of thirty years ago have said to a young graduate in medicine who proposed to spend five or ten more years, and his best years, in hospital life? They would probably have thought him an amiable lunatic. We should invent some word more dignified than 'Resident' for the man who chooses that life. You notice that the number of Residents in our best hospitals is increasing. The presence of such men in hospitals is surely adding to the importance and stability of a hospital career. A Resident is becoming as important a part of a hospital service as is the Chief-of-Staff himself. The junior men, internes and externes, should never have been given such uncontrolled powers as they had a few years ago. That was an accident in hospital development. Old-time surgeons, when they established interneships, never intended that their

assistants should have important independent powers; and for years they had no such powers. They were minutely supervised by their chiefs. With the enormous expansion of modern hospitals, however, the work and responsibilities of internes piled up in proportion, — the tasks were beyond the limited experiences and capacities of the young men; and yet they met them and assumed them with the splendid assurance of youth. Now we have the Resident, who shall temper the wind to the shorn novice. Even as it is, a two years' interne service in a busy hospital gives a man an experience in the use of his tools which an ordinary lifetime of private practice could not supply. Of men and women he comes out ignorant. Them he has still to learn."

"Another difficult problem in this community life of yours, Ely, is the trained nurse problem," I ventured. "Human nature is human nature; and when you have thirty or forty young men, and one or two hundred young women under one roof, and in the most intimate of all relationships short of marriage, it's often a question how the situation is to develop itself. Happily all these folks are very hard-worked; otherwise I suspect that Hymen and other less reputable gods and goddesses would

find themselves under a heavy strain. The wonder is that marriage is not far more common among these very marriageable people. That's one aspect of the trained nurse problem; and I think we'd best leave it, with other aspects, to the experts. One point, though, — a reply to all the severe criticism of trained nurses, — and the poor things are criticized more unfairly than any other people in the world except servants and doctors; — the proper standard reply is this, that they are quite as human and liable to error as the rest of us. I often think that on account of the almost incredible intimacy which must exist between nurse and patient, the position of a nurse in private practice is one of the most difficult positions conceivable. Two young sisters, or husband and wife, are more intimate, but, with those exceptions, comparisons cease.

"Now the nurse-patient intimacy is a forced one: a normal family is going on in its usual fashion, when suddenly the son of the house becomes acutely ill. A doctor is called, and to aid him in his labors, he promptly installs a strange young woman in the young man's bedroom. She is to minister unto him day and night, and to perform all the

necessary offices of the toilet. To a certain extent mother and sisters are excluded, and the strange young woman assumes an attitude of proprietorship and responsibility, which, under any other circumstances, would seem monstrous and incredible. To become a gracious presence in that household, such a young woman must be endowed with the tact, the virtues, and the ability of an archangel. While the illness is grave and acute, all other considerations are smothered, but as soon as the patient begins to mend, his family begin to wonder; and unless they are old hands, familiar with illness and with trained nurses, they quickly begin to chafe without understanding clearly the cause of their discomfort. One morning the mother of the family mysteriously summons the doctor to a conference in her own room before he visits the patient. She has no doubt that Miss Minns, 'the *nurse you sent us*, is an excellent person and is well trained; yes, you've employed her for five years? Yes, but should she not wear a cap while on duty; not the rule? Oh, well; she understood; — and should not Miss Minns sweep under the bed every day; — supposed she did? — no, not every day. And, is it necessary for her to go out for two hours

every afternoon? — had supposed that nurses always stood by, in case of accidents; — yes; probably she is mortal, and must preserve her health; but she is so quiet, and never tells anything; — leaves that for the doctor? Oh, did n't understand. But surely, a nurse should not object to eating in the kitchen and carrying dear Jack's trays up to him six times a day; it's only four flights. No longer customary? Oh; then I suppose . . . well; all right; thank you. I won't detain you any longer now.'

"The weary doctor escapes, but on the next floor he is waylaid by his patient's elder sister, supported by her maiden aunt — 'a most experienced woman, and accustomed to illness.' 'So sorry to trouble you, but don't you think that mother is looking dreadfully? No more than you'd expect? Perhaps not, but why should not Miss Minns give her a good massage treatment every night after mother goes to bed? She's not trained or engaged for that sort of work? — must get a regular masseuse? Oh; Miss Minns seems so kind and interested, had supposed she'd be only too glad to help mother; and with her high wages, too.' And so on day after day. In my experience a nurse

captures the family at once, or else she is a target for criticism throughout her stay. Of course the nurse is not perfect; very likely she is of a type peculiarly strange or distasteful to that especial family. Often she is their superior in breeding and education, even though the family appear well-to-do and well placed. This the family recognize and resent. All other things being equal, however, and the superficial relationship being in no way strained, the position is a difficult one for all concerned. The nurse often feels suspicious and on guard; in her distress or through native dullness, she accentuates her own faults; while the afflicted family, invaded, dispossessed, managed, and occasionally ignored, accumulate a sense of outrage, which, though intangible, is none the less real. Whenever a nurse tells me that she fears her employers are dissatisfied, and that perhaps she had better go, I always say: 'Go; at once; you can't go too quickly, both for your own reputation and for this family's peace of mind. Later they will understand your action, and will have nothing but a kind report of you to make.'

"We seem to have gone far outside of our hospital talk, Ely; but we agreed to leave hospital

nurses to experts. I have been relieving my mind about nurses in private practice; and those are the nurses about whom you and I know most."

"Let me say one more word on the subject," he replied. "There is a period, a mere moment, perhaps, when the hospital nurse is breaking the shell and emerging as a private nurse. Then is the time when all the good friendly folks gather about her, celebrate her 'graduation,' and get some amiable man, who often knows nothing of his subject, to make a pleasant little speech telling the class what nice young women they are, and how they are 'dedicating themselves to a noble career.' Or else, the fatuous man has been primed by some knowing woman, and so takes the other tack, telling the happy and well-meaning neophytes that they must n't be too smart; that they are put here to serve! that the human lot is hard at the best; and that they must n't think they know all there is to know.

"Of course they don't know anything. They're nothing but youngsters. You can't expect a parcel of girls, from twenty-one to twenty-three years old, to take a very serious philosophical view of life. They resent the 'noble career' talk as gammon,

and the harsh instruction as preaching. Mostly they have taken up nursing for a living, as they might take up teaching or dressmaking. They are glad of honest advice straight from the shoulder, and no nonsense. Don't think that I fail to understand and value the fine ethical side of the nurse's career; but in my knowledge that fine side of the life is developed out of experience, sorrow, struggle, and time. With women as well as with men, the 'noble career' is a thing of painful and laborious growth. As a fact a majority of nurses fail to develop that career at all, because most of them marry while still in the joyous age."

The solemn converse of young professional people always interests me. It is not babble; and sometimes it is informing, because it shows how the wind sets. Students of law and medicine and young practitioners seem to be most given to this sort of talk. The awful person who chatters of stocks develops his awfulness late in life; and the politician is nearly always acceptable, because the politician, whether wise or foolish, deals with subjects of widest interest. Moreover, his talk is rarely technical. Medical talk in public — "doctor

rot" as one of my tired friends calls it — is sometimes heard even from venerable lips which should have been better trained. I have agonized memories of hanging on to trolley-car straps with certain merciless consultants, while they poured out upon me and upon our long-eared neighbors the details of the case we were about to visit. I've tried to escape from my misery, by sitting down even while my companion remained standing, but that manœuvre stimulates one's tormentor to worse aggressiveness and louder shoutings. The best plan is to murmur appreciation and to approach a listening ear as near to his lips as decency will permit. Even so, painful moments arise, as when he nips off his discourse suddenly, and demands in truculent tones what you would do under the conditions he has described. I have learned to say that I can't tell until I have seen the patient.

We were speaking, however, about the shop-talk of young doctors, — and of nurses, too, if you choose. I like to hear them talk their talk and air their views, if only their speech be in season. Let them be modestly reticent, though, in the presence of older persons whose training is not medical. A young doctor by his talk may impress the village

clown or drunkard, but not the lawyer or the parson. The admiring father and mother of the paragon may well bear in mind the same advice. I recollect one beautiful afternoon of my vacation. Our little company were canoeing, and stopped at a charming camp by the lakeside to pass a word with friends. The ladies of that camping party were given to pleasant reading, and one of them to much sprightly writing also. I spent that long summer afternoon listening as she read out the letters to herself of a young medical colt — a woman — who was assisting a famous missionary in his distant field. The letters were precisely what a specialist's letters addressed to a layman should not be, — prolix, technical, gushing; but my friend thought them delightful, and the writer an entertaining and beautiful character. To the professional it was all crude, sophomoric, and unspeakably tiresome. After some few words about the place and her surroundings, with a needlessly smart criticism of the overworked surgeon, her immediate superior, the writer went on to discuss "her cases," the numerous operations at which she assisted, and her successful method of giving chloroform. The partial friend to whom this stuff was addressed was entirely pleased,

but I doubt if the writer had anticipated the larger audience.

Shop-talk and enthusiasm among the young professionals themselves is another matter, and to be encouraged; though, indeed, they care little for our encouragement. By directing the flow of talk, however, the older and more experienced man may often be of some service. Eager beginners are prone to concentrate their interest and their discussion on trivial matters of routine and narrow technique, while they invariably see the case and not the patient. Their talk will foam among the shallows of bandaging, apparatus, salt infusions, pulses, points in diagnosis, and details of the operation, instead of seeking the deeper and more profitable currents which are concerned with the significance and nature of "surgical support," the comparative value of methods of raising the blood pressure — their dangers and advantages when applied to the case in hand; the importance of a diagnosis of local disease, when the general and psychical conditions are considered; and finally the value of any operation in the patient's present state.

Medical science is full of problems waiting to be solved. Well-educated students know this; but

mostly, when undirected, they leave the solutions to others. In spite of scientific training few of us carry on into the battle of life a true scientific curiosity. We labor to live merely, and it suffices us at last to earn our daily bread. Rare and precious is the man who takes into middle life his enthusiasms and his zeal for investigating. If we could all so take them the rate of progress in science would soon be doubled; for we should have the accomplishments of men at once vigorous and ripe. Thank God, there are among us a few such; and they are those whom the world calls "great men." Their enterprise not only carries themselves far beyond the van, but opens other eyes still young enough to see the possibilities of a career. Two or three creative minds arise in every generation. These men may live without obvious reward; indeed, their lives may pass away without recognition, but happily and always they are optimists; they are men of vision, and they have learned that truly their works do follow them.

CHAPTER X

Reminiscences

With the return of summer Dr. Primrose is back at his work; he has visited the city, and has foregathered with his friends there. But he is not yet the old Primrose. He walks slowly, he minds his steps, he chooses to ride in elevators, and he goes early to bed. Moreover, he is reminiscent, nodding his head as he recounts some ancient tale. He is given to general talk rather than to professional discussion.

"Scriba," he said, as he sank into my easy-chair, "I've just encountered a donkey at the club, and I'm too old to be bothered with donkeys. He is our excellent classmate Brattle, and he has cultivated the unspeakable habit of 'cutting' folks. I supposed that that inanity went out of fashion with dueling, cutting off your eldest son with a shilling, and other barbarisms. You remember Brattle in college. He was blatant and could be a dreadful ass when in liquor. He used to talk about his ances-

tors; and divide all the world of his acquaintance into 'gentlemen' and 'cads.' He boasted of being a Southern 'gentleman'; and enlivened our dinner-table by informing us dumb-stricken Yankees that —'You Northern cowards would never have licked the South if you had n't filled up your ranks with imported Irishmen, who did all your fighting for you.' He had no sense of humor, but he had little fat legs, was boisterous and impressive, and sang a good song in a charming tenor. We thought that with time he would grow out of his follies, but I fear we were mistaken. He's done nothing worth recording since leaving college. I had n't seen him for ten years, when this morning I met him, held out my hand, and was annoyed and disgusted by being cut dead. One feels like asking why we admit such *canaille* to our clubs, anyway. Fortunately I remembered that delicious anecdote of Lincoln and the traveling Englishman. It's one of the best of Lincoln stories.

"This Englishman, you must know, possessed happily an old name, a faultless tailor, and excellent introductions. He came over here during our Civil War, traveled up and down, and was much entertained by our good-natured fellow country-

men. Finally he turned up in Washington, and was taken to see President Lincoln.

"Mr. Lincoln, tired but good-hearted, spoke a few words to the fellow: 'So you have been traveling through our country, Mr. Howard; and I suppose you've seen many unusual sights and customs.'

"'Yes, Mr. President; and, do you know, they tell me it's the habit of gentlemen in this country to polish their own boots.'

"'Indeed,' said Lincoln, looking at him sadly, 'that is a frequent habit. And pray, sir, whose boots do you polish?'

"Almost good enough to be true, is it not? I wanted to tell it to Brattle, as he turned away to talk with Crœsus; but that would have been too awkward, I suppose.

"Let me get away from Brattle. As I drove down the street I recalled Ely's story of Wendell Holmes and the ladies' luncheon. Please let me tell it: The old gentleman was asked to meet a number of people at luncheon. As he entered the drawing-room, his hostess, in some distress, met him at the door, and said: 'Dr. Holmes, we're so sorry to disappoint you, but the three men we ex-

pected cannot come. Here we are, four women. You will have to take us all out to luncheon.' 'Madam,' said the ready Autocrat, 'it shall be my pleasure. Forewarned is four-armed!'"

I looked at my visitor in some doubt. "Jonathan Primrose," I said, "this does not sound like you. Lie down there, please, until dinner-time. We will have a short and quiet evening."

Ely joined us, of course. It was many weeks since we three had come together. The talk drifted until we fell upon the time-honored subject, — what leads a man to choose his profession.

"Indeed," said Ely, "it is hard to see what else than family tradition could induce a young fellow to study medicine. Such ones as Warren and Shattuck, Mitchell and Gross must turn to medicine, for their fathers have been doctors for generations. My own people have been doctors for five generations; and I'm sure it was an advantage to me to grow up in a medical atmosphere; to know the difficulties of a doctor's life, and to understand dimly the nature of scientific thought. But what turned you towards medicine, Primrose? Your people were not doctors."

"No, they were always lawyers. The first thought

of being a doctor came to me in childhood. I had an unusual experience. When I was eight years old, my father sent me with one of my brothers to spend three summer months on a farm in the Genesee Valley, near Rochester, where we had many friends. That summer is marked with a white stone for me. The farm is a beautiful place in the township of Chili — 'Chy-ly,' they call it. Black Creek — the 'crick' — meanders through its charming fields; bits of primeval forest — wood-lots — are scattered along the bottom lands; and withal, the whole region has about it an air of ancient solidity and longtime cultivation and prosperity, as rare as it is captivating in this new land of ours. The vast grain-fields of the Western prairies had not then destroyed through competition our modest Eastern farming; and the Genesee country was famous as a garden of the Lord and a bountiful granary. The five- and ten-acre lots yielded abundant harvests of wheat, corn, oats, hay, and buckwheat, while the groaning orchards of apples, peaches, pears, and plums supplied the markets of the state.

"The old wooden farmhouse in which we lived with our kind hostess, a farmer's widow, Mrs.

Blake, and her grown daughter, Nora, stood at a crossroads and was surrounded by its barns and outhouses, its corn-cribs, home orchard, stacks, and gardens; while across the wide 'square' of country road, here almost a 'common,' were the brick house and belongings of our one neighbor, Mr. Joe Gruendike.

"We urchins were turned loose upon the farms. Provided we reported for our meals, there were no restrictions. Often we spent our days afield with the men, busy with haying, reaping, stacking, ploughing, and harrowing. Again we wandered all day by the stream. We learned the simple arts of farmer-fishing. We learned to dive and swim; and other games, less bland and innocent, I fear we learned. A small boy, Dennis Fox, skilled in field-sports, came forth from the neighboring village. Instructed in some measure by a prudent mother, he made as though to welcome us, but we knew that his heart was estranged. His years were ten. To him, city boys, as he regarded us, — for his vision knew nothing beyond Rochester, — to him, city boys were things to be despised. Did they not wear shoes and stockings, and foppish Rollo hats, and collars, and other fooleries? Above all, were

they not given under compulsion to that abomination of brushing the teeth. And then, they knew not how to fight.

"In the eyes of Dennis Fox we were fair game, but he reserved us for himself, and kindly undertook our education. First, he induced us, when abroad, to forego shoes and stockings; and to our untold agony, he forthwith led us through a stubble-field of wheat, then freshly cut. Our hats were greatly improved by removing their ribbons and immersing the hats themselves for a half-hour in the stream. We were taught to dispense at once with collars. Our most objectionable custom, by far, however, was an absurd use of the English language. It was finicking, unpicturesque, and, for the want of expletives, entirely lacking in force. We must learn at once to swear; and remember — those were the days of gross and reckless swearing. I recollect retiring to a remote corner of the rail fence in a distant field and practicing timidly some of the strange new words which this young rascal taught us.

"Happily for our peace of mind, Dennis's next move proved less successful. He had not yet licked us, and as we were unskilled in rough-and-tumble

fighting, he stated that we might pick up a little learning while he practiced himself upon us. Unhappy boy! He forgot that, though unskilled, we were not without ambition. His first assault was delivered by means of the needless and ugly kick upon my childish person. Now the kick classical, as all the world knows, is addressed from the rear and upon that portion of the body which is best protected from violence. Moreover, though the first attack may be unexpected, and the assailed person be, by so much, taken at a disadvantage, it is improbable that he will again be caught unawares. I dissembled my indignation and planned a reprisal — then new to me. A minute later Dennis prepared to resume the assault. I saw him fall back into position. In an instant he drew off, and drove at me viciously, but I was too quick for him. As his bare foot reached me I stepped aside, and leaning backwards, I seized his upraised ankle in my hand. Instantly I realized my advantage. I had him 'cast'; he was *hors-de-combat.* I sprang forward, still grasping his leg. Behind me he rolled on the ground, helpless, blinding the summer air with shrieking oaths. Then he yelled empty promises of reform. Treacherous viper, we knew their

worth, and we were through with Dennis. My brother and I threw ourselves upon him, held his hands, and extracted from him a promise that he would depart from us instantly. Then we let him up; he glared furiously and oppressed us with his words; but as we had armed ourselves with sticks, and stood our ground, he left us suddenly, and ran off along the road in a cloud of insinuations. He returned no more.

"We spent two glorious summers at the farm; the happiest of childhood, as I think; but who shall say, when all was glad? I ponder now on health such as we had, and wonder where it's gone. Why do we squander that rich blessing, our capital in life, if we but knew? And looking back through forty years I see two eager boys scampering down the lane, scouring the wood, following the teams, hunting the barn for eggs, fishing the creek, digging the garden, eating like young Indians, sleeping deeply the night of twelve hours through, and always under the gentle care and humorous, kindly eyes of Nora, the daughter, and of Mother Blake.

"Into the midst of this Arcadia tragedy came. It was mid-August; the wheat and oats were reaped and stacked and stored. The barns were bursting

with grain. The time to 'thrash' had come. We knew something of this glorious climax to the summer harvest. The great lumbering threshing-machine, horse-drawn, would make its rounds among the neighboring farms. I may not guess its ownership or the plan of its assignment; but all the farmers seemed to share it, though it was stored and operated by two of our neighbors down on the Scottsville road, — 'old' Mr. Desmond, as we called him, and his nephew, our special chum, Frank Hale. That gay and kindly heart, Frank Hale, — I recollect him well, — the friend of children, dogs, and birds, and other harmless things. He is my ideal of a fine upstanding yeoman; some twenty-five years old, — six feet, perhaps, — broad-chested, blond and ruddy; bearded, as the mode then was; expert in country life; — a farmer, carpenter, blacksmith, woodsman wise. During those weeks in which threshing was done, he drove and kept the horses, cleaned the gear, fed the machine's great maw, and at night returned home with Mr. Desmond, whom he loved and cherished as a father. The tie between the two was rarely deep and strong. I know not their private history, but they seemed much alone in the world; both

bachelors, with no other kindred in my time. The uncle, serious, silent, effective, respected; the nephew, alert, joyous, active, popular — they held their place, an institution of the countryside.

"That threshing week with us I well recall. It seemed a free and gala time. Work in the fields was stopped. The women-folk were deep in plans of feeding many men. Eating and drinking were to the fore. The great barnyard was cleared; a stout railed pen, or circuit fence, was built in which to raise the stack. The mighty doors, front and rear, were opened wide; all lumber was removed; the heavy machine was rolled upon the floor, its horses taken out, its jaws uncoupled, and the long flume or chute, whatever be its name, for bearing straw, led out across the railed-in pen beyond.

"On Monday morning early we began. There was a grand commotion. Two horses tramping out a circle in the fore yard furnished the power. The mighty engine clattered and groaned and trembled, devouring sheaves of wheat; its great steel teeth seizing the grain, rending it from its straw, pouring it into bins; while the discarded straw, whirling in clouds of dust, was tossed aloft along the chute, and piled upon the stack. Old

Desmond drove the team, around and around; while Frank, our friend, stood on the feeding-board above the pole, and all day long, deft and unceasing, fed sheaves and sheaves of grain into the jaws. Our many men about the place stood to them both, but mostly they were busied on the stack, receiving, sorting, piling up the straw. It's hard to say why such days should be joyous and clearly marked, — perhaps the novelty; perhaps because the men all work in gangs, near to the house, and have no evening tramp for home.

"For five days long our threshing lasted. Slowly the wheat is sifted from the straw; the bins are filled and the great stack piled like a classic dome above the barn. Now, Desmond and Frank Hale, with their machine, have traveled on to other farms. Our barn is swept; the doors are closed; and all made snug against the coming fall.

"Late on a sultry afternoon, a week, perhaps, after the work was done, I sat upon the horse-block in front of Gruendike's house, awaiting the call to supper from Nora Blake's great bell. The day's work was over save for the milking and other evening 'chores.' In shirt-sleeves, noisy, crowding, and cheerful, Gruendike's men had filed into his

great kitchen to eat the evening meal. Kind young Mrs. Gruendike presided at the stove, and served with generous profusion. Outside I sat, and watched the sun, still a good hour high. On the great barn floor, opposite, a rooster flapped and strutted. A clucking hen beneath a barrow gathered her chickens close. The horses snorted and stamped and shook their racks. Thin clouds, updrifting in the western sky, foretold to-morrow's rain. The walnut tree above me stirred to a passing breath.

"From far along the road a dog's quick bark — sharp as in fright — struck on my ear. The distant rattle of a team driven at speed grew loud and louder. Turning, I saw a line of dust come up the slope. Snorting and straining, two horses dragged a heavy wagon, crested the hill, trotted across the grass, and stopped before the house. Three men sat on the driving-seat. On straw behind, a blanket at his head, I saw a figure laid; blood smeared the face. Beside him poor old Desmond held a hand.

"As the wagon stopped, Desmond sprang up, his kind face drawn and anxious. 'Joe!' he cried, 'Joe Gruendike!' There was no mistaking the call of deep distress. In a moment, the farmer came

running from the kitchen door, his napkin in his hand, his red beard flying, his eye alert.

"'Joe,' said Desmond, leaning out from the wagon and speaking low and quick, 'my boy Frank is awful hurt; his arm tore off in the machine; hitch up, and drive like hell for Dr. Hicks: up there next to the church. Send him to the house as soon as he can git there; and have him fetch his tools.'

"That scene is not to be forgotten: the steaming horses; the earnest men in front, their faces turned towards us; the big green country wagon, splashed and stained; the great bed of straw, in which Frank lay groaning and unconscious; Desmond, — hatless, horrified, but cool, — leaning out over the wheel, his old hands gripping the rim, his old blue shirt thrown open at the neck; Gruendike standing, — tense, shocked and sympathetic, — taking his orders; and in the background, at the open door, the farmer's faithful wife, puzzled and uncertain; two children at her skirts, while behind her in the dim passage, the men stood craning, fearful and curious.

"By the farmer's side, unnoticed, shrank the little 'city boy,' his eyes swimming with fright and

sympathy; his hand gropingly outstretched to take that of his wounded friend. It was a doctor that they wanted, and at once. A doctor should make all right, if only he were here. The year before, when a young friend was struck and mangled on the railway, this boy had heard that very cry for help. Then up from the background of his baby life there came that other cry, which the old minister at home used to read out, as the people knelt in church; 'And we beseech Thee, O Lord, to comfort and succour all those who are in trouble, sorrow, need, sickness, or any other adversity.' Here, indeed, were need and sickness. In some dim fashion the child felt that the Lord and Dr. Hicks must both come quickly. Ah, if only he were Dr. Hicks.

"As Gruendike strode towards the big barn, I ran by his side, and held his hand: 'Mr. Gruendike, may I go with you; perhaps I can help.' He looked down at me and smiled, for big Joe Gruendike was my friend. 'Yes,' he said; 'jump in and hang on.' The men pulled the muddy old buggy out upon the grass. Bess, the freshest horse in the stalls, was put between the shafts; all buckles were drawn tight; I sat huddled in the seat; whip in hand Joe jumped in by my side, and within five minutes of

leaving his house we cantered down the hill, — while Nora Blake rang the great supper bell.

"The sun was at our backs, the long hot road stretched straight before us. The regular thud, thud of the old mare's hoofs seemed to fill up the day, while Gruendike with his flicking whip saw that she kept her pace. Above the thistles and goldenrod by the roadside, the heated air shimmered and burned; now and again the cry of a nesting bird was heard; the fields were desolate; far behind us the dust still rose, and settled where we passed. In the half-mile before us a few cows loitered, blocking the road. We came up and I saw that Dennis drove them. Switch in hand, he laughed and jeered, that for a moment we were halted.

"The drive was five miles long. At sunset we reached the cross-roads and the church, and found the doctor's house, next door. Dr. Hicks, with coat off, was in his garden, gathering fruit. We called across the high, green picket fence, and he came out — a tall, dark, rugged man, with faithful eye and serious face; a man who knew his work; a man to trust. We told our tale.

"Then we drove slowly back again, making for

Desmond's place. The doctor passed us on the road, his famous Morgan speeding. We must have been a half-hour after him in reaching the house. Dr. Hicks was there, but all was over. Poor Frank had died in the wagon going home. It was still dusk; the windows not alight. The place was sad enough, the house one of those dreary two-story carpenter-modeled structures most common in city suburbs. The paths leading to the doors were almost smothered in tall Timothy grass awaiting the scythe. The forlorn little front door, up five steps, looked as though never opened, and bore upon its middle panel the twisting handle of an unused bell. From the back door issued an old woman, 'the help,' bearing a great basket in both hands, the tears unheeded streaming on her cheeks.

"Dr. Hicks came out leading poor Desmond, speechless. Other neighbors gathered with us and heard the tale. The accident had happened towards the hot day's close. Frank Hale was tired; he had been 'feeding' the machine for many hours. He grew careless and rushed his work. On a sudden he shouted, 'Stop.' They saw him leaning forward, and they knew his arm was in the teeth. An instant halt they could not make. The horses stopped, but

for an awful spell, the works went on. The men ran up; they saw him rise; his life was pouring from the mangled stump; he looked, smiled, threw up his other hand, and fell unconscious backward, head-foremost, smashing on the wagon-pole. They took him up, bound straw with sheets tightly across his arms and chest, and tried to rush him home. He died upon the road. Perhaps, had they not moved him from the barn he might have lived. I believe not, — not with his broken head.

"Even to-day, with a veteran's experience, I think of that old accident as very bad. Imagine the dreadful mental agony, as he saw his arm drawn in. He could not stop it. Then the teeth reached his shoulder and he knew his chance was gone. The bone was wrenched from the socket, and dragged away. That was the end of thought. He fell. For him, as we all know, the time had come; but brave old Uncle Desmond must go on.

"After two days had passed they buried him, with all the world of Chili at the grave. Good Mrs. Blake and Nora, with us two boys, drove her old buggy to the house and hitched beneath a tree. The day was steaming hot; the sun beat fiercely down. The doors were all thrown open. As we

walked up the path to the front steps we passed a group of men headed by Uncle Desmond. Joe was there, and all my well-known friends; standing in awkward clothes, and unfamilar, a solemn row; their heads were bare; their faces sad and set. They were both choir and bearers of the dead. Within the house, in the forlorn front room, garnished with hair-cloth and a mighty volume of the scriptures, a plain oak coffin stood. The room was given over to the women; to me they all seemed old or middle-aged, — all in black silk and shawls, and heavy lonesome bonnets. They wiped their eyes and sat, or stood, and whispered, murmuring sounds about poor Frank. My own dear Mrs. Blake became as one of them, and looked severe, and muttered now and then a word in some adjacent ear. Nora alone was fresh and calm and sweet — a breath of youth in that sad company. I sat against the wall, low on a stool, hidden by Mrs. Blake.

"Awkward young Mr. Stiles came in, — the student-minister; arrayed in heavy black, and white disjointed tie. He held a service, — of just what form one cannot say; it seemed unending. He told about our Frank — his fine and useful life. I could have told it better. I almost cried to hear the

feeble words. He wandered on and on, and then he prayed. Dear Lord, how he did pray! He spoke with God about us all, and all our doings. I thought within myself that God must ever weep if such despairing words ascended to the throne this day, and every day throughout the world. But then they say God is all-wise; and dwelling there in bliss with saints and other joyous ones, where sorrow is unknown. I could not grasp it all. I'd never seen a funeral before. The women took some comfort, shaking their heads and wiping furtive tears. Anon, he read the Bible, — not happily, but long sonorous verses, — naming strange names, dealing with death and pain and sin, beyond my puny knowledge, for I slept.

"A strain of music sounded as I woke. The sad-voiced man was gone. Outside, the tender words of a familiar hymn rose on the summer air. My Mr. Desmond and his farmer choir in touching fervor quavered through the lines: —

> "'Nothing in my hand I bring,
> Simply to Thy cross I cling.'

"I wept; I broke out in an agony of childish sobs. Kind Dr. Hicks, who stood near at the door,

stooped down and led me out. The men and women about, in their stern faith, now dry-eyed, looked on unmoved; all but our Nora. I clung to the good human hand, and again the words of our clergyman at home returned, — 'in trouble, sorrow, need, sickness.' Ah, if only Dr. Hicks had been there in time. Then came the thought, — when I'm a man, that shall be my work.

"In the shade of the house, beyond the line of men, we stood and waited. The others joined us. For us little boys there was excitement and curiosity as well as sadness. But my brother reproved me for my outburst; he was concerned for family dignity.

"When you went to a country funeral, in those days, you saw it through. There was no unseemly scattering of the people, such as occurs after a city service. We were all mourners. So now we mounted into our buggies and wagons, and waited. Our men, going inside the house, returned with shambling steps, bearing the coffin. They were new to the work; their hands and feet disturbed them; as for their hats they knew not what to do, and so they hung them on the picket fence. Laughter is near to tears. Now and again a woman, or the little

boys, coming to the gate, broke out in hysteric giggles at so grotesque a sight, — beaver hats, slouch hats, straw hats, each with its handkerchief, in solemn disarray.

"Led by the simple hearse, whose driver kept the village tavern, we passed in slow and sad procession to the now distant graveyard, close by the church. It seemed an eternity, but so best could we show respect to Mr. Desmond and the dead.

"Who does not know the shabby dreariness of such a graveyard scene? — the walled-in square of land; the treeless waste; the tumbled stones; the garish, broken shafts; the unkempt gravel; the weeds; the tangled grass; the rusty chains. In a remote corner we gathered at the open grave. The farmers brought the coffin, lowered it down, and shoveled in the soil. Haltingly, 'Earth to earth, and dust to dust' was said by Mr. Stiles; and then again the men and women lifted a scattered voice in last salute: —

> "'When I rise to worlds unknown,
> See Thee on thy judgment throne,' —

faithfully, earnestly, every word from the heart.

"I tell you, my friends," Primrose concluded, as

he turned towards us with his smile, "those are the people who made us what we are; those are the ones with whom I choose to live. The world is better for their being here."

CHAPTER XI

A Letter from Scriba to his Son Thomas at St. Paul's School

Squam Lake, N. H.,
25th Sept., 1911.

My dear Tom:

At the Twenty-fifth Reunion of his college class, my old friend Jack Starling made a famous talk on Asses. Jack has the misfortune to be of the class one year ahead of your father's, so that I missed that talk, but fragments of it reached me. In his speech, Jack's method was to select from the class-list sundry men well known in college days; by a few vigorous strokes to recall their leading qualities; then, with charming humor, to assert that, after all, they belonged to the genus Ass, assigning each to his particular variety; for you must know that Asses, like Thackeray's Snobs, fall into certain groups. There is the Solemn Ass, the Blatant Ass, the Fresh Ass, the Ass who would be a Man of the World, the Ass for whom Women sigh, the Sly Ass, the Pompous Ass, and a dozen others. It was a

delicious study; and then Starling left to his hearers the joy of it all, — the comparing these youths at twenty with the same men at forty-five. The words were so kindly and mirthful that no feelings were hurt. Insignificant men were proud to be rescued from oblivion; and distinguished men could afford to laugh.

Much in the same way, I have often thought, could groups of men other than Asses be studied, — men of my own profession, for example, might tell by their lives an important lesson; if their lives were presented in a "before" and "after" fashion; and so, by a series of object lessons, one might answer the anxious question in your letter, — Shall I follow my father and study medicine?

Apropos, I recollect our old friend Dr. Farrington saying to me long ago, that after all, medicine is a very good business. The average doctor is earning a fair income and supporting himself years before his contemporaries in law and business are doing as well. No right-minded man, however, turns to medicine as a business, — that you know; — and Dr. Farrington's own fine career is far removed from vulgar thoughts of money-getting.

Then, again, one may look at the vocation ques-

tion from the negative point of view, — What calling shall I avoid? The other day a lady told me of an interesting experience. She had been lunching with a company of eleven other women, the husbands of no two of whom followed the same profession. In an attitude of protest towards the work of those twelve husbands, the women made their several complaints. The one would advise her daughter not to marry a clergyman, — his life is too much absorbed in parish work, and he is constantly run after by other women; the next would never marry a lawyer, — he brings his work home with him, and sits up until two o'clock; another would advise against a coal operator, — he is always worried to death about the strikes and prices, and if he happens to have a clear week, he runs off to visit the mines in West Virginia. The doctor's wife protests that her life is insupportable; her husband's hours are monstrous; she's never sure of him; he never takes her to the opera, and he has not been to a church for two years, except for a funeral. He's killing himself for other people, who are entirely selfish and ungrateful. And so the talk went round the table, — not a woman there but would have her husband change his work.

I don't believe in the moral of that story, my boy. Those women were not telling the truth. Each was trying to out-talk the last. At heart, each probably believed in her husband and his doings. They did show, though, how no profession, no calling, can be altogether comfortable for all concerned. And further, — no profession can be anything but ashes, gall, and bitterness if your heart be not in it.

For myself, I love my profession, as you know, but I rarely encourage young seekers to follow it. It is too fine a calling lightly to be entered upon. When some flabby-minded patient says to me: "Surgery always did interest me; I came near being a doctor myself," my only possible reflection must be that medicine and surgery have had a fortunate escape. Those things are trifles; but the anxious father of a weathercock son is not to be lightly regarded when he comes to me with the question, "Shall I put my boy into medicine? He seems to have a fancy for it." My inclination is to groan, to beat my head, and to shout *No ! No !* Then I remember a little chapter of my own youth: I had always promised my dear father, your grandfather, that I would 'go into medicine.' He himself and my elder brother were lawyers. One day in my sen-

ior year I walked with my foolish friend Brattle through the college grounds. He pointed to the law school, and said, "I go there next year. How about you?"

"I'm in for medicine," I said.

"Pshaw," he retorted. "Come with us to the law school," and he named half a dozen of our friends, who would go with him. "Law is the profession for you. No gentleman studies medicine." And, do you know, so feeble was my resolution, and so impudent his urging, that almost he persuaded me. I know now that he, too, was an Ass, a sorry, Pompous Ass. Later, my wise father's look of scorn, a look without words, upset the silly Brattle argument, and swung me back into my place.

All the same, medicine, like most scientific callings, is an exacting mistress. Men follow other pursuits, with more or less satisfaction, as means to an end, — to provide a living and to support their families. You may not so treat medicine. You must follow it as the end itself, else will your life be wretched. That is the fundamental fact about medicine, which escapes the superficial critic. Like the doctor's wife at the lunch party, he finds

fault because of surface discomforts. It's as though the astronomer's wife were to scold because the astronomer must be up o' nights if he would learn the stars. These things must needs be.

You are to know that there are two broad motives for a man's following medicine: either he loves his kind, and wishes to serve them; or he loves science, and would fain pursue it. There are no other motives which can lead one to distinction among us. You see that in a fashion a doctor must be something of a missionary, something of an idealist, and very much of an enthusiast. He must have breadth of vision, sanity; a mind capable of work without flagging; readiness to accept the new, courage to reject the old; optimism, and a scorn of that crabbed skepticism which glories in intrenched dogma. *Dogma* has no place in the vocabulary of science; nor has *heresy*. Remember that Voltaire defined a heretic as a man who does not believe as I do. Above all, a doctor must have sound health — during his early years, at least.

You may say that I am hard on you; that I have set an ideal standard which no physician attains. Of course I have. None but the gods attain their ideals; but you must have ideals, none the less. And

I am talking of the qualities we see in leaders. No proper man embarks on an enterprise among men except with the determination to succeed and to lead. If you go into medicine you must expect to encounter the best minds of our time. Gradually it has come home to me that the leaders in medicine are remarkable men. Among such you should strive some day to mingle as an equal. I believe you to have a good mind, a white soul and capacity for work. Those are useful assets. You are eighteen years old, with one more year at school. Whether you become a practitioner or a research man, — student and teacher, — you have ten or twelve years of study ahead, before you can support yourself or marry a wife. This is a fact not to be forgotten.

You are a boy still. Take three more years before determining. Look about you. See something of older men. Three years from now you will understand me better. In this letter I do not try to persuade. I have put down facts for your contemplation. Keep the letter and read it again in the middle of your college course.

My dear Tom, you must know that I shall be very happy, should you decide some day to join

me. You will, indeed, be a staff for my old age. So much I think it fair to say.

The comparing of experiences, and the balancing of promise against accomplishment, is one of the pleasures of maturity, and sometimes one of its pains. Out of the twenty-four men from my college class, who "went into" medicine, eighteen still write themselves "Doctor." That does not mean that a quarter of our number have forsaken medicine for other callings. Those six men, no longer in our ranks, are either dead or they never matriculated at a medical school. Here is an interesting fact about physicians, a fact unique, — they rarely change their job. You don't hear it said of a man active in the world that he *used to be* a doctor. Physicians sometimes retire, but not for change of business. This is true of no other class of men. Medicine gets a grip which is seldom loosened. It has a fascination all its own. There is a peculiar freemasonry, as there is a peculiar code of ethics, among doctors.

You must remember that in my time the classes graduated from our great universities were small as compared with the classes of to-day. Of my own class there were but one hundred and seventy-two,

all told. All our eighteen doctors have done well. In trying to classify them I have marked them as distinguished, 1; superior, 9; modest, 8. By "distinguished" I mean a man of international reputation, who has made solid contributions to medicine. By "superior," a man widely known at home, who holds responsible positions as a teacher and clinician. A "modest" physician is one who devotes himself to taking care of the sick and attending to his own proper business. Though I have thus arbitrarily grouped these men, I am by no means sure that each is properly placed. For instance, I suppose your kind godfather, Dr. Primrose, must be put in the "modest" group, though his services have been very great. Again, Dr. Ely might well be called "distinguished." He is known widely in this country and in Europe as a brilliant practitioner and an able writer, but he cannot be called an original investigator. He is "superior." On the whole, I think I am justified in calling my old friend Blair, of Liverpool, the one truly "distinguished" doctor of us all. His career is interesting, and it teaches, among other lessons, that the boy is not always father of the man. Blair was "easy" in college. For the first two years he did nothing,

except play amiably. Then he disappeared for a year, either removed by his father or rusticated. That year of absence seems to have matured him, for he returned to us a student. He was graduated in good standing, and went with me to the medical school. Even there he was not oppressive, — merely a good average man. We had adjoining desks in the chemical laboratory, and I remember him as painstaking, slow, and thorough. Then we drifted apart. He became a house-physician, I a house-surgeon. He immersed himself in internal medicine, especially in diseases of the chest. He has the rare faculty of perceiving in what a subject is weak; and has the capacity and insight to hurl himself at the problem and produce a remedy. He studied in Europe when modern work on the blood was new. He came home, was called by Superbus to Liverpool, when the great new university hospital was founded, and there he is to-day. He has been through all the teaching and clinical grades, from Resident up; and now, since the resignation of Superbus, Blair is a full professor and head of his department. He is some twenty-two years in practice; he is known the world over for his contributions to our knowledge of certain fevers, and of

diseases of the blood and of the heart. He is a tireless worker; a careful and informing teacher, a profound and convincing writer, and a brilliant speaker. To these pleasant qualities he adds a capacity for practice. Through a large section of our country he is in demand; he flourishes as a prosperous consultant; and with it all he is the same good friend and agreeable companion that we knew twenty-five years ago. I believe him to be a happy man.

Well, now; does all that sound attractive to you? I dare say it does not, and yet I have given you in outline the story of the most successful doctor of my own group. You are old enough to regard somewhat the philosophy of life, and you recall the old saying that what is one man's meat is another man's poison. How can you, a school-boy, appreciate the accomplishments of a mature man, and sympathize in his life-work? The other day I asked the son of a distinguished novelist if he remembered a certain recent writing of his father. "Oh, no," said the boy, "that's in one of father's books. He's writing 'em all the time, but I never read 'em." In my simplicity I had supposed that he knew and rejoiced in every word of his father's writings. So, no doubt, you are untouched by the dry details of

Blair's life. The personal human experiences, the adventures, the hardships of a doctor's life are what would appeal to you, — and Dr. Blair has had them in plenty. There are a few delightful books telling about such things. When you are a little older, read the "Lives" of Paré and Pasteur in France; of Harvey, Hunter, Huxley, and Lister in England; of Rush, Warren, Howe, and Bigelow in America. All these were high-hearted, able men, — men of action, men whose works still live. Such are a few, but there are hundreds of others you should know. As for the fiction writers, — they do not understand us. They draw us as inane sentimentalists, as simpering toadies, or as vulgar brutes. Oliver Wendell Holmes knew us, of course; but almost alone among the novelists George Eliot in "Middlemarch," and Robert Grant in "Unleavened Bread," catch the true scientific spirit and the point of view of the cultivated and sincere physician.

Medicine should appeal to the imagination of adventurous youth. Of all the highly developed pursuits in civil life, it is perhaps the most perilous and the most varied. The contagion of the casual patient, the epidemic of the slums, the scourge of

the tropics, the problems of country practice, the fascination of laboratory study, the trials of the exploring party, and the hazards of the battle-field are incidents of medicine. The doctor is always present. From the cradle to the grave, on land and on sea, he is in demand. For him who has eyes to see, and an understanding heart, the physician's calling is one of endless diversion, of constant interest, of broadening content.

Think of these things, betimes; and remember that I am,

With entire sympathy,

Your affectionate

FATHER.

THE END

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